Chronicles

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The Disappearing Border

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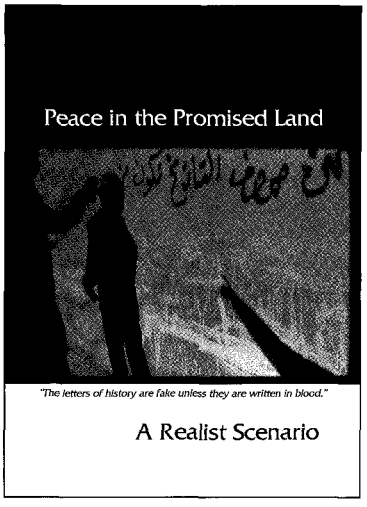
The purpose of this book is to rekindle debate in the United States about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. . . . It is not normal that the discourse on the dispute is far more dynamic, varied, and intelligent in other countries—including Israel—than in America.

—From the Foreword

Peace in the Promised Land: A Realist Scenario

edited by Srdja Trifkovic

featuring chapters by Middle Eastern experts, *Chronicles* editors, and scholars Thomas Fleming, Michael Stenton, Leon Hadar, Srdja Trifkovic, Aaron D. Wolf, Paul Gottfried, Wayne Allensworth, David A. Hartman, Doug Bandow, Stephen B. Presser, and Ivan Eland, as well as color maps, source documents, and a selected bibliography



Few issues in American foreign policy evoke more emotion than U.S support for Israel. With the death of Yasser Arafat and a new centrist coalition in Israel, however, it is time to reconsider the question, "What is the American interest in this conflict?"

Peace in the Promised Land is essential reading for anyone who wants to move beyond sound bites and policy proposals to understand the roots of the conflict—and the role that the United States can play in its resolution.

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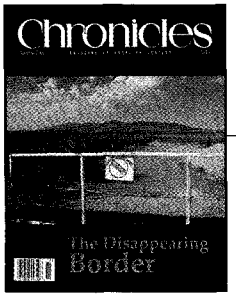

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Fire

Christopher Check's review of W.G. Simms' *A City Laid Waste: The Capture, Sack, and Destruction of the City of Columbia* ("Total War," September) was an excellent consideration of that volume's importance in current topical terms. If Southerners were allowed to know the true story of the invasion and burning of the civilian South by U.S. troops, then maybe they would be the first to question invasions elsewhere today. That is another reason why Southerners especially should read Simms' account of the burning of Columbia and the civilian atrocities committed there. Dr. Brian Cisco's new book, *War Crimes Against the South* (Pelican), is a good volume to supplement Simms. It corroborates on a large scale the truth of what Simms writes.

—*James Kibler*
Athens, GA

No moral person could defend raping, burning, and looting Columbia, as described by Christopher Check in his review of *A City Laid Waste*. However, South Carolina herself had sown the seeds of the destruction of her capital.

It was South Carolina Rep. Preston Brooks who caned Sen. Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts abolitionist, in 1856. In 1861, South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union and also captured Fort Sumter, the first overt military act in what became a long and bloody four years. Without excusing Union general Sherman and his troops, it was fortunate they laid waste to a small town, not Charleston.

Sherman was not the first proponent of total war. For example, it was Scipio Africanus who razed Carthage and sowed the ground with salt in 149 B.C. Mongolian Genghis Khan and his sons practiced particularly brutal total war in the 13th century.

—*Mark G. Michaelsen*
Madison, WI

Mr. Check Replies:

My thanks to Professor Kibler for his kind words and for his recommendation of Dr. Cisco's book.

Thank you, also, to Mr. Michaelsen for his apt comparison of General Sherman with Genghis Khan, although, for pure military genius, I am going with Genghis Khan. I did not suggest that what we today call "total war" began with Sherman. On the contrary, I noted that the Peace of Westphalia and the ideas of theorists including Hugo Grotius were efforts to restrain the increasing brutality of warfare. The Jacobin ideas of the French Revolution ended any hope of even lip service being paid to just-war theory in the modern world. Not for nothing has the Holy Father questioned whether a just war can be fought today at all.

Scipio Africanus did not practice anything like total war. After Scipio defeated Hannibal at Zama, Carthage remained independent, and Hannibal was not surrendered. It was in the Third Punic War that Scipio Aemilianus, or Africanus Minor (whom Scipio's son had adopted), occupied and destroyed Rome's deadliest enemy. It was not the best day for the pagan republic, but unless we are willing to adopt pagan morality, equate the Punic Wars with the Civil War, and regard Christian Southerners as baby-murdering idolaters, the parallel is entirely irrelevant.

Acting alone, Preston Brooks caned Charles Sumner with a hollow cane that broke during the event. The medical reports that immediately followed declared that Sumner was not badly harmed. The *Boston Post*, a day after the assault, reported, "The despatches from Washington yesterday afternoon were that 'Mr. Sumner was better, and would be able to occupy his seat in a day or two.'" Sumner's three-year "recovery" (which he spent on holiday in Europe) was a stage-managed political stunt to foster sympathy for the abolitionists. What provoked Brooks? Sumner's infamous "Crime Against Kansas" speech in which he insulted Brooks' uncle, Sen. Andrew Butler, and called the state of South Carolina a "brothel." The *Boston Courier* deemed the speech "exceedingly insulting." The *Detroit Free Press* called it "atrocious [and] filled with libels and insults, gross and vulgar, which their author had conned over and written with cool and deliberate malignity, and repeated before the looking-glass, night

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after night, in order to find the appropriate grace with which to spit them." The *Washington Star* found it "little more than a tissue of personal accusation and assault, and charges against all his opponents without the slightest effort to sustain their truth." The *Cincinnati Daily Inquirer* thought Sumner had asked for it: "[W]e would suggest that those who provoke attacks of this violent description are not without great blame." The people of Columbia did not ask for their city to be sacked. They surrendered on terms expecting better treatment than Eastern Europeans received at the hands of the Mongol hordes.

On the Blue-Eyed Coulter

Robert Stacy McCain's main point in his review of Ann Coulter's *Godless: The Church of Liberalism* ("Is Ann Coulter Among the Prophets?" September) seems to be that those of us who are not blonde and blue-eyed should not envy those who are. ("But we all cannot be blue-eyed blondes, and, in the Age of Media, many must toil in thankless obscurity while a favored few reap fame and fortune.")

The question is not whether *Chronicles* editors and contributors sit around pouting because they are not called upon to be pundits on television. The question is why such people as Coulter, with scant credentials, receive such fortunate attention, while others who are well established do not—and, indeed, would "toil in thankless obscurity" or be forgotten altogether, were it not for *Chronicles*.

Ann Coulter was just another East Coast lawyer when, in 1996, for some reason, she got her first gig on the fledgling MSNBC as a "legal analyst." What influential paper had she written on law, or what famous case was she part of that merited this promotion into the world of celebrity punditry? Her vaulting into prominence over people who have far more distinguished legal careers strikes at the heart of the popular conservative argument that hard work and talent are all it takes to achieve success in society.

Coulter belongs to a group of "conservative" celebrity pundits who emerged in the 1990's on cable television and talk shows. They used personal, family, and celebrity connections to get jobs as writers for well-known conservative publications or as fellows at think tanks, or to become regular guests on Sunday-morning news programs. And, while these people were enjoying their newfound fame, such scholars as M.E. Bradford, Murray Rothbard, Samuel Francis, and Paul Gottfried were ignored.

McCain claims that Coulter's notoriety enables her to reach many thousands who would never read a Berkeley law professor's book, let alone anything by Joe Sobran or Peter Brimelow. At this moment, thousands who have access to the internet can order a book by Joe Sobran or Peter Brimelow or read their articles on the web. It's not as though such works are kept hidden in vaults away from the general public. What gives Coulter notoriety is a general media culture that affords her every opportunity to put outlandish statements in print or to say them on the air (like claiming, after September 11, that Al Qaeda was planting nukes in Manhattan), which generates more notoriety, which creates more demand for her talk-show presence and her books. The idea, as McCain says, that a "friendly editor would take the time to talk her out of the most egregious of her excesses" is silly. Miss Coulter would undoubtedly tell the editor to go to hell, as she did *National Review*'s editors, because she knows full well that such "egregious excesses" provide her with the publicity that she craves.

—Sean Scallon
Arkansaw, WI

Whether or not one concurs with Robert Stacy McCain's appreciation of Ann Coulter, we must agree that the icon is wrong. Miss Coulter should not be displayed in the modest robes of the maiden who is the Mother of God but as the icon she has chosen for herself—in a leather vest with a golden cross dangling in ample cleavage. Such "cross in the cleavage" Christianity better conveys the sense of religion as ornament. It is not that I object to the ornaments of religion; indeed, as one who loves Christian art, I recognize the connection between the cosmos and the cosmetic, between ornament and order. Nevertheless, a religion that is entirely cosmetic calls for no conversion; it is entirely a matter of denouncing one's enemies—except, of course, the enemy one sees in the mirror.

McCain is correct that Coulter identifies some serious targets. Given the nature of political liberalism, the game is simply too easy, and too overworked. Further, it is not the most important game in town, even if it is the most profitable. The liberals who identify themselves as such are not really the problem anymore. Rather, it is the liberals who call themselves "conservatives," neo- or otherwise, who pose the real and present danger. Critiquing them requires some self-examination, however, just as authentic Christianity does. Coulter and the high-decibel talk-show hosts (if a term connected with *hospitality* can really apply) critique all liberalisms but their own and their party's. The task of self-examination has been relegated to a few cultural outliers, such as *Chronicles* and the *American Conservative*.

In the kinky Christianity of Coulter, the small cross dangles among, er, larger concerns and is subordinate to them, both visually and actually. Now that's good iconography. Miss Coulter's cover-art icon accurately conveys her true concerns, and we, as conservative gentlemen, ought to respect the lady's wishes.

—John C. Médaille
Irving, TX

Mr. McCain Replies:

I entirely sympathize with the concerns of both Mr. Scallon and Mr. Médaille.

Perhaps I did not make it sufficiently clear that—in referencing the fact that Miss Coulter's telegenic blondeness has aided her rise in the Age of Media—I was lamenting the way in which ideas are not judged on merit but by the camera-readiness of the ideologues. Some good ideas do not reduce easily to 30-second sound bites, and some admirable thinkers do not come across well on TV. And I hope that Mr. Scallon understands that there was some self-deprecating humor involved, as I myself have the proverbial "face for radio."

As for Mr. Médaille's concerns about Miss Coulter's display of the cross amid her cleavage—well, this is how fashionable young women dress today, and Miss Coulter does not consult me about her wardrobe choices. Nor do TV producers consult me about the rancorous "shout show" format, which is a terrible way to present ideas; for some strange reason, it is very popular with audiences.

At any rate, if I failed to distill my review into a thesis, I will now: It is good when a popular and prominent conservative figure dares to fraternize with us rogues who don't blindly follow the Movement herd.

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by Darío Fernández-Morera

Pope Benedict and Islamic Intolerance

The Muslim rage at Benedict XVI's citation of a late 14th-century Byzantine emperor who condemned Muhammad's call to spread Islam through war has obscured the numerous cultural implications of the Pope's learned speech. One of them is the unique importance for Western civilization of classical thought, in general, and Greek thought, in particular—as preserved and transmitted by Christianity.

Greek thought clearly informs the Christian sacred texts, particularly Saint John's Gospel, in language and content. It is not evident, however, in other monotheistic religions' sacred texts, such as the Koran or the Tanakh. As the Pope notices, when John writes, "In the beginning was the *logos*" ("*Logos* means both reason and word"), he is adding to, and therefore, from the Christian viewpoint, completing the Revelation already present in the Old Testament. ("In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.") So the New Testament makes explicit that Revelation includes a Greek mode of understanding the sacred and the universe.

Although Benedict does not mention it, this mode of understanding goes back at least to Heraclitus of Ephesus in the sixth century B.C.: for Heraclitus' proto-monotheistic thinking (at times, he spoke of "*theos*," not of "*theoi*") the *logos* constituted the intelligible Law of the universe.

Christianity preserved and transmitted a good deal of classical culture after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. The best known examples of this salvaging effort are the Benedictine monasteries. Less appreciated is the role of the Christian Greek Orthodox Roman Empire—the Byzantine Empire—in the preservation and transmission of Greek culture. Muslims did not "preserve" or "give" to the West the texts of classical Greece, as is sometimes repeated. These Greek texts had been "there" all the time, preserved in the Byzantine Empire, cut off from the Latin West by the great division within Christendom between Latin Catholic and Greek Orthodox. When Muslims conquered the Middle East from the Christian Byzantines in the seventh century A.D., they obtained some of the texts from the Christian Syrian scholars, who had translated them into Syrian. From Syrian, Muslim scholars translated them into Arabic.

So these preserved Greek texts and, indeed, Greek culture did not reach the West until the 15th century, brought over by Christian Greek scholars fleeing the Muslim onslaught. We will never know how much of classical Greece was lost in the three-day sacking and raping of Christian Byzantium by its Muslim conquerors in 1453.

Classical culture, at its best—that is, when not overcome by the political correctness that forced Socrates to commit suicide and Aristotle to flee—made open discussion possible. The *agora* was a tough marketplace of ideas, as Saint Paul found out when he preached to the Athenians.

Benedict XVI pointedly used the word *universitas* not too subtly to remind his probably religiously indifferent academic audience that the Catholic Church created the sort of institution where that audience worked. As heirs to classical culture, the medieval universities could, at times, serve as a forum for then potentially "offensive" questions—such as attacking the validity of arguments that "proved" the existence of God.

As shown by the debate mentioned by the Pope, between the Byzantine emperor and the Persian scholar, in the Christian Middle Ages, a Christian and a Muslim could fiercely argue the strengths and weaknesses of their religions. In the 21st century, they cannot. Muslim fundamentalists might kill both, or cause a major stir, as happened after the Pope's speech. Such a no-holds-barred debate—as opposed to nice let-us-find-what-we-all-have-in-common "ecumenical" gatherings–would also be unthinkable today even in a Western university, because bringing up certain issues can damage an academic career, prevent hiring or worse, and make even a powerful academic step down—as the case of a university president at Harvard illustrates.

Another statement by Pope Benedict offers more material for reflection: "[W]e made up a whole." He referred to the situation among faculty at Regensburg during his time as a teacher. But his subtext may be again the Greek principle of rational organization–the *logos*–underlying Christianity's organic view of things. The *logos* is God and is with God. This equivalence makes rational whatever God creates. Therefore, the universe is rational, even if humans cannot fully understand its rationality. In fact, God cannot act against reason because reason is part of God. This viewpoint, the Pope remarks, stands in contrast to Islam, where Allah is not limited by anything, not even Himself, and can therefore conceivably be irrational. In the West, the holistic Christian viewpoint has been largely supplanted by ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical fragmentation. So the Pope's *universitas* has withered away, especially in the so-called humanities, which originate in the *studia humanitatis*, but which may no longer be properly called "the humanities." The Pope's statement also brings to mind the divisions within Christianity and some of their consequences, such as abandoning Byzantium to its fate and leaving Catholicism to fight without Protestant help the Islamic threat during the 17th century.

The Pope errs in placing Sura II—where the Koran asserts that there is no compulsion in religion—among the early Suras. It is a late one, though perhaps abrogated by the also late but less peaceful Sura IX. In any event, Sura II did not stop Islam from conquering the Arabian peninsula, the Middle East, Persia, Byzantium, the Balkans, North Africa, and much of Spain, among other places. So another possible implication of the Pope's speech is that, just as Christianity was once crucial in preserving classical thought and its rational strain, so the Faith may be the only hope of preserving them today. If this is true, then the abandonment of Christianity by Western Europe may already have left it ideologically defenseless against determinedly holistic systems stronger than the desire for material well-being, longevity, parliamentary elections, and the latest electronic device.

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WAL-MART is hated by some people for the very reasons others love it. Liberals and leftists hate it because they allege Wal-Mart's substandard wages turn employees into helots. Libertarians and some conservatives love it because Wal-Mart, expanding like the Blob, represents no-borders planetary capitalism. Wal-Mart is McDonald's, only supersized.

Whatever one's opinion, a recent article in the *New York Times* invites a few observations, not least of which is that Wal-Mart is much more dangerous and destructive than libertarians and some conservatives think. The *Times* disclosed that the American Enterprise Institute collected $100,000 from the Walton Family Foundation in 2004, and the Heritage Foundation has garnered $20,000 since 2000. The Pacific Research Foundation got $175,000 from 2000 to 2004. These are hardly astronomical sums, considering that AEI's annual budget is $24 million; Heritage, the Wal-Mart of think tanks, slurps down $40 million each year. These "conservative" groups say they would write in support of Wal-Mart regardless of donations, which may well be true; they blindly support the capitalist model Wal-Mart represents. It is equally plausible that Wal-Mart conservatives invite donations by supporting such corporate giants and their quest to dominate global markets.

For a moment, forget the donations and pro-Wal-Mart editorials. They are only part of the real problem with Wal-Mart. As the *Times* does not report, Wal-Mart and its fellow titans are, in profound ways, enemies of American culture and prosperity. If you accept, for a moment, merely for the sake of argument, that Heritage and AEI are conservative, you might just ask what other groups suckle at Wal-Mart's teat. The *Times* slyly conflated the Walton Family Foundation with Wal-Mart itself, but a glance at Wal-Mart's corporate foundation paints a different picture.

According to the Capital Research Center, the corporate side of the Walton empire shoveled nearly $750,000 to leftists in 2004, compared with $2,500 to "conservatives." None of this, of course, shows up on the foundation's website. Among the recipients were the NAACP ($60,850), AARP ($3,750), the Izaak Walton League ($2,250), LULAC ($12,000), the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation ($10,000), and Planned Parenthood ($2,500). The biggest recipient of Wal-Mart money? The National Council of La Raza, at a cool $630,000.

La Raza ("The Race") is the radical "Latino" organization that is aiding and abetting, by supporting illegal immigration, the Mexican *reconquista* of the American Southwest. La Raza is uprooting English as the national language, plowing under American history and heroes, and planting Mexican-"Latino" culture, like so much maize, in the fertile ground of American public schools. Recently, Wal-Mart dumped spokesman Andrew Young, the black former mayor of Atlanta, for spouting unwise and unkind remarks about Jews and foreigners who supposedly exploit inner-city blacks. Yet the company merrily subsidizes "The Race." La Raza travels with baldly racist organizations that seek *reconquista*, the targets of which include Washington and Oregon. What will happen to the Wal-Marts in Seattle and Portland after the *reconquista* is anyone's guess, but whatever the answer, we can now see the problem with Wal-Mart. In its single-minded pursuit of profits, the company funds organizations that undermine American culture, traditions, law, and sovereignty.

This, in turn, points to the problem with capitalism on the Wal-Mart scale. To continue growing, Wal-Mart, like any cyclopean, globe-straddling corporation, must ingratiate itself not only with the political elites who rule the local, state, and federal regulatory bureaucracies, but with the cultural elites—in this case, the leftists using Wal-Mart's ill-conceived largesse to peddle multiculturalist and open-borders ideology. These leftists and the illegal immigrants who love them would destroy the culture and economic system that created Wal-Mart. Sadly, the libertarians and "conservatives" who adore Wal-Mart, and believe its always-low-price bric-a-brac are manna for Middle America, apparently are as comfortable with Wal-Mart's philanthropic treachery as the leftists who oppose Wal-Mart's alleged predatory wage-and-pricing practices. Yet, if the enemies of American prosperity and culture whom Wal-Mart supports attain their goals, the libertarians and "conservatives" won't have a Wal-Mart to adore or a country in which to adore it. That middle America will be gone. Neither Wal-Mart nor its worshipers care that a free-market economy requires consumers who appreciate and understand a free-market economy and love their country, including the laws and culture that create them. The culture creates the economy. Destroy the culture, destroy the economy.

So Wal-Mart *is* akin to McDonald's: It is the apotheosis of everything wrong with America. Entering the maw of a Wal-Mart is creepy. Any normal person over the age of 40 viscerally feels, as the cornucopia of junk and tatterdemalion illegal immigrants who shop there deluge his eyes, that something is horribly wrong beneath the garish consumerism and materialism. Well, something *is* wrong. The company knows no loyalty.

Wal-Mart is a corporate citizen of the world no more loyal to the land in which it grew than La Raza and the other leftists on Wal-Mart's dole. The *Times* fortuitously revealed that libertarians and "conservatives" applaud Wal-Mart's bankrolling of the ideology that will ultimately destroy us. Most importantly, as with all business partnerships between the ideological and corporate elites, the rest of us have no say in the matter.

Wal-Mart is subsidizing the destruction of America. Libertarians and so-called conservatives support the endeavor. Some of us dare call that treason.

—*R. Cort Kirkwood*

KEITH ELLISON won the nomination of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party on September 12 to represent Minnesota's 5th Congressional District, which centers on the city of Minneapolis; he seems all but certain to win the general election against the Republican nominee, Alan Fine.

Ellison's primary victory has generated tremendous national media attention, because his likely triumph in November would mark the first election of a Muslim to Congress. (Ellison, who is black, would also be the first black representative from Minnesota.) This might be remarkable enough in American politics five years after September 11, but it seems even more surprising given Ellison's past associations with the Nation of Islam and his ongoing personal ties to

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Palestinian-born Nihad Awad, cofounder of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

Ellison, a former Catholic, converted to Islam in college and entered the orbit of Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam in the early 1990's, working as an organizer during the group's original 1995 "Million Man March," but he has since claimed to have distanced himself from the group and its racist and antisemitic ideas. As for CAIR's Awad, Ellison has known him since his days at the University of Minnesota and has had Awad speak at fundraisers for his campaign. Predictably enough, Ellison's electoral success in the predominantly white 5th has created the perfect narrative of a triumph of multiculturalism and tolerance throughout much of both the mainstream and alternative media, so much so that attempts to scrutinize Ellison's ties to these groups have been routinely denounced in the liberal blogosphere for their supposed prejudice. However, the real significance of Ellison's prospective victory is that it signals another advance of CAIR's political influence and the deepening of the persistent confusion and wishful thinking in America about an assimilable, moderate Islam that can function inside a pluralistic society and representative government.

More worrying and potentially dangerous than anything else in his record is Ellison's CAIR connection and what a U.S. representative with close ties to the Islamic group might represent in American politics. CAIR has been acquiring increasing power over the last five years through successfully posing as the voice of "moderate" or "mainstream" Islam and effectively exploiting the administration's willful ignorance about the group. CAIR, as described by Srdja Trifkovic on *Chronicles*' website, "is a radical political group that does not merely want to change the nature of discourse on Islam in America, it wants to Islamize America." In the last year, the group has also succeeded in petitioning the Bush administration to allow its representatives to see, in depth and behind the scenes, the security procedures at O'Hare International Airport. This was done supposedly in the interest of guaranteeing the absence of anti-Muslim bias, as CAIR had made allegations that Muslims are subjected to unfair scrutiny upon their arrival in this country. CAIR also successfully forced the White House to abandon its rhetoric of referring to jihadists as "Islamic fascists" on the grounds that the combination of the two words was derogatory to Muslims. (In fact, the main reason to object to this phrase is not its supposed derogatory nature but because it imagines jihadism to be an effectively secular, political ideology comparable to fascism rather than the precisely Islamic and religious movement that it is.)

The point is not whether the administration should use that particular phrase but that CAIR was able, within a matter of days, to convince the administration to abandon this language by insisting that it vilified Muslims, once again striking the pose of the benevolent "religion of peace" and effectively playing the role of oppressed minority and victim. With a congressman who has close ties to the CAIR leadership and receives support from that group, CAIR's ability to browbeat other elected figures and shape government policy to suit its agenda will increase. CAIR has effectively been an active sympathizer with the "extreme" Islam from which its "moderate" Islam is allegedly distinct, showing the distinction to be essentially a false one. With one of its allies in Congress, it will be better able to continue to perpetrate and maintain this fraud at the very heart of the U.S. government.

—*Daniel Larison*

ORIANA FALLACI, R.I.P. Back in the 1960's, Oriana Fallaci was a "brave," leftist, feminist hackette. Her iconoclastic interviews were praised by the chattering classes for bringing the genre to the heights of postmodernism: She was lauded for doing for journalism what Susan Sontag was doing for fiction. But whereas the latter progressed to become an apologist for *jihad* and died as a self-hating degenerate, Fallaci's old age brought her wisdom and true grit. She died on September 14 as an outstanding defender of our culture and civilization against the onslaught of barbarity from without and betrayal from within.

For some 20 years, Fallaci was famous for her political interviews with the great and the mighty, including Deng Xiaoping and Henry Kissinger, who later wrote that his 1972 interview with her was "the single most disastrous conversation I have ever had with any member of the press." On his own admission, he had been flattered into granting it by the company he would be joining in Fallaci's "journalistic pantheon" but realized too late that it was more like a collection of scalps.

Fallaci's once-famous reportage has not aged well, and, on the strength of it alone, her death would have attracted scant attention. In the aftermath of September 11, however, she became a fierce critic of jihadism and an outspoken opponent of Muslim immigration to Europe. Her book *The Rage and the Pride*—a provocative extended essay initially published by Italy's *Corriere della Sera*—caused a sensation. While countless *bien-pensants* and talking heads were prompted by September 11 to explain to the masses the peaceful and tolerant nature of "true Islam," Fallaci understood what was going on: "A war that they call Jihad. Holy War. A war that might not seek to conquer our territory, but that certainly seeks to conquer our souls. That seeks the disappearance of our freedom and our civilization. That seeks to annihilate our way of living and dying, our way of praying or not praying, our way of eating and drinking and dressing and entertaining and informing ourselves. You don't understand or don't want to understand that if we don't oppose them, if we don't defend ourselves, if we don't fight, the Jihad will win. And it will destroy the world that, for better or worse, we've managed to build, to change, to improve, to render a little more intelligent, that is to say, less bigoted—or even not bigoted at all. And with that it will destroy our culture, our art, our science, our morals, our values, our pleasures."

Fallaci had no qualms about contrasting Islam with the West, and she despised those who, in an effort to evade the truth, downplay and minimize the differences between the two civilizations: "It bothers me to even talk about 'two of them,' to put them on the same plane as though they were two parallel realities of equal weight and equal measure. Because behind our civilization we have Homer, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Phydias, for God's sake. We have ancient Greece with its Parthenon and its discovery of Democracy. We have ancient Rome with its greatness, its laws, its concept of Law. Its sculptures, its literature, its architecture. Its buildings, its amphitheaters, its aqueducts, its bridges and its roads. We have a revolutionary, that Christ who died on the cross, who taught us (too bad if we didn't learn it) the concept of love and of justice."

Yes, I know—the old agnostic went on—*there is also a Church that gave me the Inquisition, the torture and the burning*

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at the stake. But Fallaci, who was granted an audience with Pope Benedict XVI last year, readily recognized the contribution of Christianity to the history of European thought, "the inspiration it gave to Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael, the music of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, to Rossini and Donizetti and Verdi, and to science that cures diseases . . . "

The learning curve of Oriana Fallaci on the issue of Islam may be traced back to her famous October 1979 interview with Ayatollah Khomeini, soon after the fall of the shah, when she took off her *chador* in the middle of the proceedings. His political and social views were hardly a revelation to her, but his passing comments on the music of the West shook her deeply. The old man declared dryly that it "dulls the mind, because it involves pleasure and ecstasy, similar to drugs," instead of exalting the spirit as it should. "Even the music of Bach, Beethoven, Verdi?" Fallaci asked, to which Khomeini curtly replied, "I do not know these names." He went on to allow for the possibility that, if Western music could be found that does not dull the mind, it would not be prohibited: "Some of your music is permitted. For example, marches and hymns for marching . . . Yes, your marches are permitted."

For once, she was genuinely horrified. As she told the *New Yorker* earlier this year, "I am known for a life spent in the struggle for freedom, and freedom includes the freedom of religion. But the struggle for freedom does not include the submission to a religion which, like the Muslim religion, wants to annihilate other religions. Which wants to impose its 'Mein Kampf,' its Koran, on the whole planet. Which has done so for one thousand and four hundred years. That is, since its birth. Which, unlike any other religion, slaughters and decapitates or enslaves all those who live differently."

As an astute analyst of world affairs in her mature years, Fallaci knew that the Islamic genie, released by the United States (thanks to Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski's "excellent idea" to support Osama bin Laden and his ilk in Afghanistan in 1979), had come back to us like a boomerang. She recalled, in *The Rage and the Pride*, the footage of *mujahideen* attacking Soviet positions: "Do you remember those bearded men with the gowns and the turbans who, before firing their mortars, shouted 'Allah akbar! Allah akbar!' I remember them very well. I used to shiver hearing the word 'Allah' coupled with the shot of a mortar . . . Well, the Russians left Afghanistan . . . and from Afghanistan the bearded men . . . arrived in New York with the nineteen kamikaze."

Unlike her beloved New York City, European cities would succumb, she feared, because of the Muslim demographic onslaught on the Old World, an invasion unparalleled in human history. This was a key theme of *The Force of Reason*, the best-selling sequel to *The Rage and the Pride*, published last year. It made Fallaci the subject of several "hate-crime" lawsuits in her native country, where a court in Bergamo indicted her for "defaming Islam." In her final months, she was gripped by deep pessimism, lamenting the decline of Europe, which refuses to confront the "reverse Crusade" by the "sons of Allah."

Europe, she declared last year in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, is already "Eurabia, a colony of Islam, where the Islamic invasion does not proceed only in a physical sense, but also in a mental and cultural sense." What actually occurred, she wrote four years earlier, "was not an immigration[;] it was more of an invasion conducted under an emblem of secrecy—a secrecy that's disturbing because it's not meek and dolorous but arrogant and protected by the cynicism of politicians who close an eye or maybe even both." The tolerance level was already surpassed 15 or 20 years ago, "when the Left let the Muslims disembark on our coasts by the thousands."

Of course, she prompted countless howls of rage from coast to coast and from one side of the Atlantic to the other, from among the degenerates, cowards, masochists, madmen, and villains. (Christopher Hitchens, who is all of the above, has described Fallaci's work as "a sort of primer in how not to write about Islam.") They can relax now, and remember her as a "controversial author" who has been "harshly criticized" for "inciting hatred against Islam." She will be sorely missed by those of us who know what she knew, and who abhor what she abhorred.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA: Mark your calendar now for The Rockford Institute's **Tenth Annual Summer School**, July 10-15, 2007, in Rockford, Illinois. The topic will be "The Stuarts and the English Revolution: From 'Charles the Martyr' to William the Dutchman." The period is crucial to any understanding of British and American history, including our own Revolution and War Between the States; for all the strife and horror of those troubled times, it was also the age of Dryden, Marvell, and Milton, as well as Hobbes, Filmer, and Locke. Among the faculty will be Thomas Fleming, Donald Livingston, Fr. Hugh Barbour, and James Patrick. Visit *ChroniclesMagazine.org* or watch future issues of *Chronicles* for more information.

Our poet this month is **Leo Yankevich**. Born in western Pennsylvania in 1961, Mr. Yankevich lives with his wife and three sons in Gliwice, Poland. His poems and translations have appeared in *Blue Unicorn*, *Cedar Hill Review*, *Edge City Review*, *Envoi*, *Iambs & Trochees*, the *MacGuffin*, *Poetry Nottingham*, *Staple*, the *Tennessee Review*, and the *Windsor Review*.

Our cover photo and several inside illustrations are provided by **Gregory McNamee** of Tucson, Arizona. A widely published writer, editor, and photographer, he is the author, most recently, of *Moveable Feasts* (Praeger, 2006).

Additional interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson**, **Elizabeth Wolf**, and **Nicholas Garrie**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University. Miss Wolf received her B.F.A. from the School of Art at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and resides in Chicago. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

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by Thomas Fleming

El Gringo y El Mexicano

America has not been a nation for well over a century. She is more like an Indian stew: Never taken off the fire, the mess of wild carrots and fish is gradually transformed by the daily addition of squirrels and squash, birds and deer, and the odd bit of human body. By the end of a month, the burgoo has gone through so many transformations as to be unrecognizable. In the same way, a largely Anglo-American Protestant nation was transformed first by Northern Europeans; then, by Southern and Eastern European Catholics and Jews; and, in the latest phase, by Latinos, principally Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, and, above all, Mexicans.

No one knows how many Mexicans and Mexican-Americans live here. In the roundest of numbers, there are perhaps 15 million Mexican immigrants, a third of them illegal, and perhaps 15 million U.S. citizens of Mexican origin or descent, for a total of some 30 million. There are at least ten million more people from other parts of Latin America. As a percentage of the American population, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans have overtaken African-Americans as the dominant minority group, and, if the current rates of immigration are permitted to continue, the Mexican and Latino proportion of the population figure could double in ten years. Given the differential in birthrates between non-Mexican native-born Americans and Mexican-Americans, the United States may be rapidly headed toward a situation resembling that of Canada, which is bilingual, bicultural, and binational. In the worst case, this would produce an armed struggle between the two groups. More optimistically, one might imagine a future United States in which Americans of Mexican descent have been peacefully assimilated.

The term *assimilation* has distorted many a discussion of immigration. Mexican immigrants are not a blank slate on which pop culture and public schools can engrave some predetermined "American" message; they are a distinct people, with their own language, culture, and history.

When two cultures come into a long-lasting contact, several results are possible, ranging from conflict to amalgamation, though the two are not mutually exclusive: In border areas, the people of one culture may imitate the other's folkways without growing to love the people across the frontier. Texans on the border have learned to eat Mexican food and pepper their language with mispronounced Spanish phrases, but they may still express hostility to Mexicans, both individually and collectively. Similarly, Mexicans in Juarez and Nuevo Laredo may watch American television, eat at McDonald's, and spend a good deal of the year on the American side of the border, while harboring resentments against their wealthy neighbors to the north.

The most dangerous meeting of cultures is the sort of warfare carried on by the Indians of the American Southwest and Northern Mexico with European settlers. For generations, the Apache fought with Mexicans and Americans to maintain their very existence. They lost and became marginal players in a country they once possessed, much as Mexicans, after two wars, became marginal players in the northern parts of Mexico that are now American states.

Even the most violent conquerors will take women from their subjects and absorb at least some of their culture. To describe this process of mixing, I prefer the word *amalgamation*, because *assimilation* assumes that cultural transformation is a one-way process. Rather little of the vast, largely unreadable sociological "literature" on assimilation that has overflowed the study of immigration addresses real-world issues. Few of the social scientists appear to have any idea of what, historically, the American identity (or identities) is (or are).

For one neoconservative pundit, America is defined as the public use of the English language, liberal egalitarian political ideas, and the Protestant Work Ethic. Such an abstract definition conveniently leaves out large groups, including Catholics, Southern crackers, and traditional conservatives. Fond of graphs and choking on a speciously technical vocabulary of invented terms, those who subscribe to this view display little knowledge of American history and still less of traditional American culture. They write glibly of immigrants assimilating, without ever considering what it is they are assimilating to, and, when confronted by natives who do not welcome a massive influx of foreigners, they take no interest in any nativist point of view, which, even in its mildest form, is condemned as racism.

This abstract approach to assimilation derives, ultimately, from the conviction that America is an exceptional nation, one not rooted in blood, soil, and kinship but "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Proponents of this view are quick to label the more old-fashioned view, that the nation is an extended family, as bigotry, but no amount of repetition or rhetorical extravagance can disguise the dangerous logic that is at work.

If I love my country because it is mine, I must be loyal to it, even when I disagree with its policies, but I do not necessarily regard it as superior to everyone else's country, and I may have no inclination to say that all other countries, to the extent they are legitimate and worthy of respect, must approximate my own. The advocates of the "propositional nation," however, insist that the United States is not only the best nation in the history of the world but a beacon to all mankind, the natural home of all the good and decent people in the world, and the enemy of all regimes that deny their subjects equal rights. Thus, by the same argument, a propositional nation is not only obliged to open its borders to strangers "yearning to breathe free" but justified in engaging in endless crusades to impose its propositions on the rest of the world.

American exceptionalism is as dangerous to Americans as it is to the rest of the world. Violent immigrants may, in fact, destroy a native culture and identity, as British settlers did in North Amer-

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ica. On the other hand, it may be the immigrants who are absorbed, peacefully or not, by their hosts. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, France received a steady stream of immigrants from Italy, Spain, and Poland, but the comparatively slow rate of immigration and the power of French cultural institutions (army, schools, Church) did a thorough job of assimilating the newcomers.

More often, however, a small but dominant immigrant group gradually adopts the language and culture of its subjects, particularly when the preceding culture is older and on a higher level. This is, to one degree or another, what happened after the German occupation of France, Italy, and Spain, but not until the standard of living had collapsed, and, with it, much of the cultural proficiency of the Roman world. Medieval Italy was not simply a revival, much less a continuation, of the old Roman order. The everyday language was less complex and contaminated with Germanic words; personal vengeance and dueling were acknowledged forms of justice; sanitation, hygiene, and health had collapsed to a primitive level.

Finally, in some instances, different ethnic groups may live side by side as the French and English have done in Canada, the Flemish and French in Belgium, and the French, Italians, and Germans in Switzerland, to say nothing of the ethnic patchworks of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or postcolonial states in Africa. Sometimes, the coexistence is peaceful, as in Switzerland; at others, one or the other group may long for separation, as in Quebec, Belgium, and Yugoslavia.

Which scenario will be played out here, as the Hispanic population becomes, say, one fourth or one third of the population? An answer to this question will be determined partly by the circumstances and partly by the outlook of those giving the answer. Certainly, most non-Hispanic Americans, whatever their views on immigration, expect Spanish-speaking immigrants to abandon their language and accept the mainstream "values" of American culture. There are leftists, as well as Chicano nationalists, who oppose assimilation. Some might welcome a reconquest of the territory taken from Mexico, while others speak of a multicultural society that will include many cultural alternatives to the white-bread Anglo-American tradition.

Assuming, for the moment, that the preferred model is assimilation of immigrants to the "American way of life" and that the least desirable would be a *reconquista* that turns the Southwest into something like Quebec, what are the most favorable conditions under which a sizable minority can be integrated into the mainstream? There are two sides to this question, defined, roughly, by the border between the United States and Mexico.

Any country that expects to absorb a large population of aliens must have a coherent sense of itself. Such a sense of identity is the product of many elements: a single language; a unified culture based on shared moral values and common faith; and a sense of history. To shape and transmit this identity, strong institutions and traditions are required: a national literature and an accepted set of classics; effective schools that reflect and reinforce the moral and social outlook of the nation; a self-confident church or, failing that, a set of cooperating churches; some form of adolescent initiation, such as universal military training.

America meets none of these requirements. Mexico, with her distinctive cuisine, music, and historical mythology, comes far closer. The differences between Mexicans and Americans are not superficial, nor will economic success eliminate them. As Octavio Paz pointed out in 1979, "Our countries are neighbors, condemned to live alongside each other; they are separated, however, more by social, economic, and psychic differences than by physical frontiers." While the more obvious differences in wealth and power might be overcome, he added, "the really fundamental difference is an invisible one, and in addition it is probably insuperable."

Why would decent Mexicans want to assimilate? Mexican immigrants arriving today are greeted by a shoddy mass culture—fast food, canned music—that offers few incentives except to the lowest characters. The choice of most immigrants is either to assimilate, jettisoning language and cultural identity in favor of the mass culture, or remain Mexican. Ironically, the latter may be the better choice; the longer immigrant children remain in the United States, the worse off they are, and "the more 'Americanized' they become, the more likely they [are] to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse, unprotected sex, and delinquency."

Immigrants who arrived 100 or even 50 years ago were confronted by an American myth that emphasized the courage, generosity, and rugged independence of the American spirit. That patriotic myth, however, has been displaced by a New Myth, in which ruthless white patriarchal males eliminated the Indians, exploited blacks, subjugated women, and poisoned the environment. The American ideal lay not in the past but in the future, at the end of a long road, signposted by the liberation of slaves, women, children, homosexuals, and immigrant minorities. Lincoln took the first big step forward toward a just world, and he was followed by the IWW and the AFL; Martin Luther King, Jr., Betty Friedan, and César Chávez; and an endlessly expanding circle of Latino-rights agitators.

The New Myth also offers a new version of U.S. relations with Mexico. For earlier generations, the defenders of the Alamo were heroes who were ruthlessly slaughtered by Santa Anna, the archetypal Mexican leader—corrupt, violent, and incompetent. The American left, by contrast, has applied its universal paradigm of American oppressor/minority victims to Mexican-American relations. Although only the tiniest fraction of Mexican-Americans today are descended from Mexicans who once lived in the American Southwest, all Mexican immigrants have automatic entrance to the privileged class of victimized minorities. Of course, this privilege is not translated into bank accounts or good jobs—those are reserved for immigrants who learn to speak English and play by American rules. But students in public schools are encouraged to cling to their native tongue and taught the litany of complaints against the Anglo ruling class.

At heart, the celebration of the Mexican identity in American schools is an attack on Euro-America. Students are taught to hate the American past and to despise the pathetic Anglos who are the only obstacle to the reconquest. Chicano radicals have little influence today, but they are funded and encouraged by public schools and public universities. If Mexican immigrants refuse to integrate into the American mainstream, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Sunk into a stupor of buying and consuming, we have turned our backs on our own civilization and offer nothing to our children but the gospel of success.

But we should look on the bright side. Ten years from now, Anglo teenagers will be trading in their rap CDs and baggy jeans for straw hats, boots, and *corridos* celebrating the homicidal exploits of drug runners. This could be the accordion revival Tony Bukoski is dreaming of. ©

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Obituary
by Leo Yankevich

Today I leaf through the obituaries
and find out who has died among the famous—
an actress, doctor, and philanthropist—
the stories of their lives take up a page.

But I recall my neighbour, Betty Amos,
who, with beads wrapped round a gnarled fist,
tried to cure cancer with Hail Marys,
never letting faith succumb to rage.

There is no mention of her name at all,
no words relating kindnesses and deeds,
how she brought us apples in the fall,
and fed the hungry pigeons pumpkin seeds.

No Flowers, No Doves
by Leo Yankevich

When we entered the burning city
charred corpses greeted us.
A child's hand dangled from a scorched tree
and the twisted wreckage of a bus
mocked the stillness of the sky.
Gunner gagged, Ski scratched his head,
neither understanding why
he had to liberate the dead.

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by Joseph Sobran

Aaron's Tormentors

This summer, as the odious Barry Bonds advanced toward Henry Aaron's home-run record, I told a friend: "I'm going to write Bonds a letter. And it's going to be even more vitriolic than the one I wrote Aaron 30 years ago."

Just kidding, of course! When Aaron broke the most venerable record in baseball—then held, of course, by Babe Ruth—his triumph was turned into a nightmare by an avalanche of ugly mail, full of obscenities, racial insults, and even death threats. I was amazed. What kind of man does it take to write such a thing at all, let alone carry it through by putting it into a stamped envelope and sticking it into the mailbox? Wouldn't self-respect, at some point in the process, stay his hand?

Evidently not. Thousands of such men (and women?) went to the trouble of discharging their mad spite on poor Aaron via the U.S. Postal Service, though I've never heard anyone boast of having done so. As with restroom graffiti, you know someone is doing it, but you can't imagine who, since nobody admits it. Pride of authorship seems to be minimal. I guess it isn't the sort of thing one brags about.

My amazement has abated since I got on the internet. E-mail seems to have liberated the sort of demons that assailed Aaron. In the free-for-all of cyberspace, people can and do write things (to total strangers) that would presumably appal their mothers, things they would never dare say to one's face, but which they feel they may utter risk-free, with the total impunity of those who lack even the inhibitions of conscience and self-respect.

I suppose it tells us something about human nature that some people are willing to be as abysmally base as Aaron's tormentors. "Most men quarrel because they do not know how to argue," says Chesterton. Yes, very true, but they certainly do know how to quarrel.

Still, it's puzzling. What furtive satisfaction can there be in doing something so self-debasing you'd be ashamed to tell anyone you had done it? And why should Aaron let anonymous expressions of hate, from people both cowardly and incapable, spoil his pleasure in his achievement? We all want to be loved, but, when he expected to be lionized, he found himself irrationally hated instead, and it was so unnerving that he still hasn't got over it.

This is the mystery of hatred. Love can be a mystery, too, but at least it makes more sense, and we can admire it. We can only shudder at what Coleridge called the "motiveless malignity" of Shakespeare's Iago—"Honest Iago," as everyone calls him, until his terrible lie is exposed.

Another Shakespeare character gives us a clue. When Laertes learns that Hamlet has killed his father, his fury is measureless:

> To hell, allegiance! Vows to the blackest devil!
> Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit!
> I dare damnation.

He will "cut his [Hamlet's] throat i' the church."

Daring damnation comes close to the essence of it. Hamlet chides himself, ironically, for not being a Laertes. He, too, hates the man who has murdered his father, but he cannot quite cross the fatal line: "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." He worries about his own salvation, and the ghost may be a devil trying "to damn me." In one sense, revenge may seem a son's duty, but it is also, after all, a sin.

As I write, we are observing the fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks. These are often ascribed to Islamic fanaticism, but Islam, of course, condemns both murder and suicide. The real motive was pure hatred—the self-consuming hatred that is willing to die in order to kill an enemy—even if it was rationalized in Islamic terms, and even if it was provoked, in an important sense, by American foreign policy. Laertes is greatly provoked, too. So is every suicide bomber.

Hate can be as selfless as love, when it makes the enemy the center of one's being. Though love may be patient and humble, hate is in a hurry. It is usually connected to indignity, a violent sense of the humiliation of the self. And unless it is avenged, it can become unbearable. "The devil, that proud spirit, cannot endure to be mocked." Love can laugh at itself, but hate insists on having the last laugh, at any cost.

Americans are startled to find themselves hated. Like Aaron, they expect the world's admiration and are stunned by its loathing, as if anti-Americanism were contrary to nature. Wouldn't the Iraqis welcome us for liberating them, toppling a tyrant, and bringing them a democracy like our own? Fred Barnes of the *Weekly Standard* has called the Iraq war "the greatest act of benevolence one nation has ever done for another"—a judgment that, by now, requires little comment.

If life were like that, the New York Yankees would be the best-loved team in baseball. Maybe love makes the world go round, but hate seems to make most of the history. Men have always been willing to die in war, giving what Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion." Is it impious to suggest that devotion may play a smaller part than spite and malice? Envy used to be recognized as one of the capital sins, but modernity has banished the ideas of the soul and diabolical rages. It looks for the causes of war in economic factors, as if Cain had killed Abel in a border dispute.

We have a rich literature of love, but a relatively skimpy literature of hate. A fuller analysis of this darker sentiment might help us understand, for example, why our governments now prefer to call war "defense."

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The Economic Realities of U.S. Immigration

Counting the Cost

by David A. Hartman

Mass immigration is changing the fundamental character of America—our culture, institutions, standards, and objectives. Until recently, our society was the envy of the world, so why are these changes even necessary? In addition to the ruling class's commitment to globalism and multiculturalism, the chief reason that is given in support of open borders is the economic benefit to both the United States and the world as a whole. The burdens, however, are outweighing the alleged benefits.

To get a sense of the size of the burden, we have to look at the demographics of the current immigrant population and compare them with those of native-born U.S. citizens. A study released by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in November 2004 is a good place to start, as it succinctly summarizes the changing demographics of the immigrants. Since less than 12 percent of the foreign-born population arrived before the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, foreign-born residents here today are primarily representative of the immigrants that arrived since 1965.

As of 2003, foreign-born residents who arrived before 1970 made up less than 2 percent of the total U.S. population, and, of these, 81 percent were naturalized U.S. citizens. Total foreign-born residents, however, were 12 percent of the population, and 62 percent of them were not U.S. citizens. Those who had arrived before 1970 were primarily Europeans and Latin Americans—39 and 38 percent of the total, respectively. As of 2003, however, 53 percent of foreign-born residents were Latin Americans, 25 percent were Asians, and only 14 percent were Europeans.

Fertility provides a back door for immigration, as any baby born here is automatically a U.S. citizen. This, in turn, makes it easier for his parents to be eligible for naturalization. It is all too common for pregnant Mexicans, in order to secure citizenship for their children, to cross the border and present themselves at American hospitals that cannot legally refuse them care. According to the official demographics, however, the age distribution of immigrants by place of origin did not differ greatly from that of native-born Americans, although the latter appear to have a significantly higher proportion of children under the age of 18. This reflects the fact that most immigrants come to the United States as adults, while their children are classified as native-born. On average, immigrants have moderately higher fertility rates and will retire with a slightly greater number of offspring as workers.

The workforce-participation rates of foreign-born citizens differ little among ethnic groups, but they are moderately lower than native rates, primarily because fewer foreign-born women work. The unemployment rates of Asians and Latin Americans are higher than those of native workers, with significantly higher unemployment rates for women—whereas men make up the majority in the unemployment line among native workers. If we compare foreign-born to native workers by occupation, most of the numbers are similar—except those for Latin Americans, 72 percent of whom are employed in blue-collar jobs *versus* 36 percent of native workers.

The distribution of incomes among naturalized and native-born citizens is similar for both families and individual workers. This is not the case for non-naturalized immigrants, who are much more heavily weighted toward the lower-income brackets. Of those entering the United States from January 2000 to March 2004, six million immigrants had median incomes that were 41-percent below those of all native citizens and 20-percent below the incomes of those foreign-born residents who were already here.

Educational attainment is essentially the same between the native population and those born elsewhere, except among Latin Americans, half of whom are not high-school graduates, and a quarter of whom hold only high-school diplomas. Of this group, Central Americans and Mexicans account for two thirds of Latin Americans with even worse educational skills. The distribution of educational skills is a predictor of earnings distributions, particularly explaining earnings below median, as George J. Borjas has found.

Thus, it is no surprise that the distribution by age of naturalized citizens at the poverty level is very similar to that of native-born Americans. However, immigrants who are not citizens—whether children, workers, or retirees—are twice as likely as natives to be at or below the poverty level. Worse still, of immigrants who arrived between January 2000 and March 2004, 27 percent had incomes below the poverty level—again, no surprise, since 31 percent lacked high-school diplomas.

Since the inferior distribution of earnings for "Latin American foreign-born" mirrors that of "non-U.S. citizens," and given the implications of the other demographics, illegal immigrants, it would appear, are primarily of Latin American origin (led by those from Mexico). And these are the immigrants who depress U.S. wages and salaries, increase the burden of welfare, and generally add to the costs of government.

Starting around 1972, the average real compensation (earnings plus fringe benefits, plus payroll taxes) of all U.S. private-sector employees, both salaried and hourly, per unit of output began to plummet—a trend that has continued to the present. Basically, during this period, all private business-sector employees were receiving a decreasing share of real Gross Domestic Product (the measure of output). Moreover, the earnings of all production workers (those paid by the hour) per unit of output declined by more than half, and, in manufacturing, by nearly

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70 percent, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (The general decline—nearly one quarter of all private-sector earnings—was far exceeded by that of the U.S. manufacturing sector, which declined by nearly one half.) Curiously, unemployment rates first rose and then fell over this period. Labor had little pricing power, but the reduction in the cost of labor created new service-sector jobs, which filled the gap.

The transition to the Information Age is supposed to have created demand for more skilled workers, but, over the past two decades, this was not apparent in the United States from the constant ratio of hourly to salaried workers in the private-business sector. Despite the rate of increase of productivity in manufacturing—twice that of the private-business sector as a whole—a rising flood of imports cut the U.S. workforce's share of manufacturing workers by 60 percent, driving them to seek employment in other sectors. Workers with greater skills sustained their incomes by adjusting to the new technologies, but the surplus of unskilled workers found employment in highly price-sensitive services sectors and faced stagnant hourly rates and fewer available hours to work, which meant a severe cut in pay.

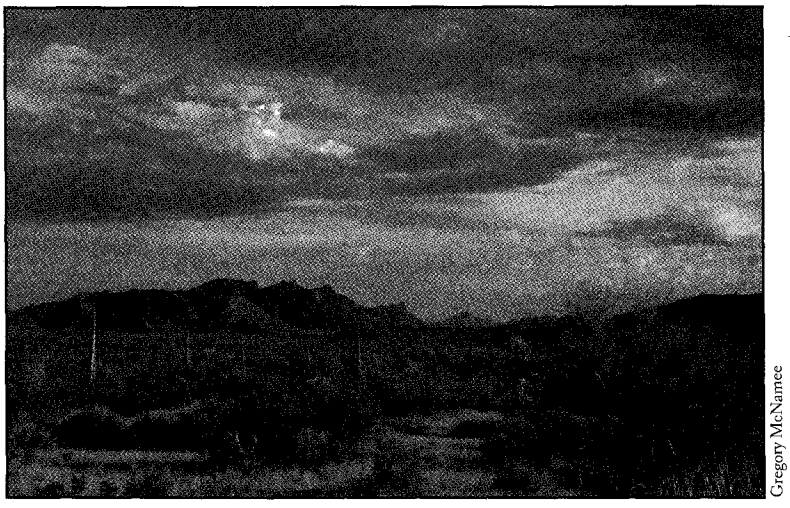
Even an increase in fringe benefits could not prevent the share of personal income for private-sector employees from declining. (Of course, along with more fringe benefits came higher FICA taxes, whose gleanings were redistributed from workers to retirees, as well as an inflation of health-insurance costs that provided lesser coverage and only favored healthcare providers.) The increase of women in the workplace, particularly married mothers whose families could not make ends meet, was as much an effect as a cause of the extra supply of labor and the depression of income among unskilled workers overall.

Some make the case that immigration serves a useful purpose for the United States by providing skilled workers who are currently in short supply—for example, doctors from India who help to fill vacancies and contain runaway healthcare costs. (Why the world's largest producer cannot provide its own skilled workers in such fields is a separate question.) Even if the argument were valid, a similar case could not be made for the unskilled workers who currently account for two thirds of the U.S. foreign-born population and three quarters of Latin American immigrants. A comparison of earnings in current dollars from 1972 to 2005 shows what this increasingly excessive labor supply has done to earnings. Over this period, reductions of weekly earnings ranged from four percent to forty percent in those occupations that saw the greatest increase in immigrant workers and averaged nine percent for all hourly workers in the U.S. private-business sector.

The coming increase in the ratio of retirees to workers caused by the aging of the Baby Boomers has prompted fears that the Social Security and Medicare trusts will soon be insolvent. Immigration will help to solve this problem, but only if it is targeted at skilled workers; "next of kin" immigrants, as well as refugees and those seeking asylum, will push the unskilled labor markets to the limits, if they are to maintain civilized wages.

Since the passage of welfare reform in 1996, most Americans have assumed that entitlements for immigrants have been effectively terminated, but this is not the case. Naturalized citizens have not been denied access to welfare; they only have to wait for five years from the date of their naturalization to apply for it. Refugees and aliens granted asylum can receive welfare for seven years, under present law, which also permits the states to grant other need-based aid to most legal immigrants who have lived in the United States for five years.

While the welfare-reform legislation ended entitlements for illegal immigrants, other legal rights resulting from U.S. Supreme Court decisions have superseded much of this. Even though illegal aliens are not eligible for Medicaid benefits, no hospital can legally deny "emergency" treatment, which includes much of what Medicaid would cover (at twice the cost). Similarly, another costly welfare entitlement, public education, cannot be denied any resident child, legal or not, by public-school districts. Moreover, Mexican children who are not U.S. citizens are allowed to attend our public schools along the border without paying tuition.



Gregory McNamee

According to James Bernsen of the Lone Star Foundation, the cost of providing public education to immigrants significantly exceeds the costs borne by the state of Texas for healthcare, human services, and criminal justice for immigrants. In total, Texas is spending a net $3.5 billion per year on immigrants ($4.5 billion per year minus $1 billion in estimated taxes collected). Bernsen considered various estimates and concluded that the best guess of the number of illegal immigrants currently in Texas is 1.5 million. Since Texas is relatively frugal in dispensing welfare, a conservative national estimate of the annual cost of welfare at the state and local levels for 13 million illegal aliens would be $30 billion.

When amnesty is granted to large groups of illegal immigrants, it is particularly costly, since they possess a lower level of skills and will therefore earn less than U.S. workers. And, as Bernsen's research shows, the paltry amount of personal income taxes and FICA taxes paid by these workers (often negated by the Earned Income Credit) does not come close to funding the composite cost of Social Security and Medicare retirement benefits they will receive.

If the current population of illegal immigrants is granted amnesty, the estimated cost of their retirement entitlements would be $350 billion dollars, an average of $157,000 per family—in current dollars. And Social Security and Medicare premiums and benefits are inflated annually based on increases in average employee compensation. Since the current batch of illegal aliens did not all arrive in one year, this potential $350 billion liability is an accumulated figure. But it does tell us that the current arrival of 444,000 new illegal aliens per

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year could carry a future actuarial amnesty bill of $44 billion per year for the cost of their retirement alone.

In addition, when any illegal alien becomes a naturalized citizen as a result of amnesty, his family—wife, children, siblings, parents—becomes eligible for citizenship, and, when the latter come, they generally bring with them a similar set of skills. The Census Bureau reports that, as of 2004, 82 percent of immigrants admitted to the United States were "family sponsored" and "immediate relative"; thus, the total cost of amnesty will be far higher than that of the illegal aliens themselves.

> The United States of America has no special moral obligation to become an amalgam of every group of people that desires to relocate here.

The cost of capital investment for infrastructure and employment for immigrants is another factor that is regularly ignored. The non-defense infrastructure that government provides for transportation, education, water supply, sanitation, and other public services has cost the public $8.4 trillion (at current value) since 1960—$58,700 per worker. At the same time, the average worker requires a private investment of $96,600 (based on $13.3 trillion in tangible assets, as estimated by the IRS at cost). Thus, a total investment of $155,300 will have to be allocated to each illegal alien who is a candidate for amnesty; we should have, therefore, some sound economic criteria for selecting such candidates before citizenship should even be considered.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2003, English was not the language spoken at home in 42.2 million U.S. households, which translates into 18 percent of the country and 35 percent of the households in the southern border states (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California). Of the 25 largest American cities, the highest proportion of households speaking a language other than English were found in El Paso (76.5 percent) and Los Angeles (59.9 percent). This balkanization of America is similar to that caused by the great wave of immigration that began in the 1880's, which led to the public outcry of the 1920's, culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924.

A study by the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank found that students in public schools on the American side of the border had higher illiteracy rates than those on the Mexican side, which is partly the result of the insistence of U.S. schools on bilingual education. The poor communication skills of these immigrants contributes to high levels of welfare dependency and crime; Latin American immigrants are twice as likely as native-born Americans to have incomes at or below the poverty level.

Ethnic areas in which immigrants are not assimilated are hotbeds for gang activity and organized crime, particularly the narcotics trade. It has been estimated that 70 percent of criminal behavior is related to narcotics distribution or addiction. The basic security of Americans is being threatened by immigrant gangs, as drugs imported by aliens are sold openly on the streets.

The United States is being invaded—literally—by Central Americans *via* our southern border. The disinclination of these illegal immigrants to speak English and assimilate, their welfare requirements, their depression of U.S. workers' incomes, and their sheer numbers are intolerable. Washington must demand that the Mexican government stop this illegal invasion of our borders. With Mexican cooperation—military, if necessary—a regulated temporary-worker program can be possible. Without such cooperation, the erection of a physical barrier, reenforced by the U.S. military, will be necessary, along with the complete cessation of all employment assistance to their excess workers. The United States simply can no longer ignore the effects of excessive illegal immigration—and the eventual Mexican annexation of the border states, which is the inevitable consequence of our current policy.

The United States must adopt an effective temporary-worker program, much like the one Canada employs. Transportation and its costs are borne by employers. Wages are the prevailing level for Canadian workers. A large proportion of the earnings are withheld until the workers return home. The workers are employed on a yearly basis and must return home annually. Living quarters and working conditions must meet state standards. An agent of the Mexican government is available to police the workers and resolve problems. The Mexican government chooses the workers who participate in the program. The workers get the jobs they need, the effect on prevailing wages is regulated, employers get the workers they seek, and immigration of unwanted citizens is reduced.

Overall, the principal economic beneficiaries of U.S. immigration fall into three categories: the immigrants themselves; their employers, particularly in the service sector; and those consumers with higher incomes who desire more and cheaper personal services. Those footing the bill are both the native-born workers whose incomes have been depressed by the excessive supply of immigrant workers and the three fifths of Americans who pay the income taxes that subsidize, through welfare entitlements, the native-born and immigrant workers alike whose incomes are below the poverty level.

As the demographic statistics of immigrants following the 1965 Immigration Act show, the age, education, and income distributions of naturalized citizens are reasonably comparable to those of native-born Americans. It is the largely Latin American group of illegals who are the great drain on our economy, causing low wages and dramatically increasing the size of the welfare state.

There are several steps that we must take to stop the bleeding. First, we must begin to monitor our northern and southern borders diligently, allowing the entry of noncitizens only through immigration checkpoints.

Second, immigration policy should be based primarily on the acquisition of workers who possess desirable skills and character; and their next of kin, as well as *bona fide* asylum seekers and refugees, must meet these same standards.

Third, work visas should be granted only on a year-to-year

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basis and be subject to quotas set annually by Congress that are designed specifically to limit the depression of the wages and income of native-born workers.

Fourth, to obtain naturalized citizenship, immigrants should be required to acquire certified civic schooling and proficiency in English.

Fifth, any amnesty for illegal workers should be off the table. Those who are already here should be allotted green cards only to the extent necessary for a transition period, after which they should be returned to their native countries. If they desire to return, they should be required to apply for work visas or citizenship through the normal legal process.

Sixth, English should be the official language of public schools, with "English immersion" schooling required of every candidate for naturalization who lacks proficiency in English.

Seventh, employers should be required to authenticate visas and Social Security cards before offering employment, and state officials should meet the same requirement before providing immigrants with driver's licenses, welfare benefits, and other state privileges. Those who violate this requirement should be subject to felony charges and, if convicted, suffer fines and incarceration.

Eighth, the U.S. Constitution should be amended, so that children receive automatic citizenship only if they are born to native or naturalized parents.

And, finally, the Mexican government should be held responsible if it refuses to stop encouraging this invasion of the United States and the violation of our borders by its citizens.

The United States of America has no special moral obligation to become an amalgam of every group of people that desires to relocate here. Immigration to the United States should be in the best interests of Americans. Furthermore, our government has no right to depress native-born workers' incomes by opening our borders to excessive immigration or nonreciprocal free trade to enrich employers here or abroad, nor can it justly continue to allow the fabric of our nation to be unraveled by immigrants who spurn our language and culture. If America does have a unique obligation, it is to preserve her heritage as an example of how individual freedom, private property, and limited government can thrive and prosper when based on individual, family, and community responsibility and sacred ethics. Immigrants should be carefully selected as prospective guardians of that heritage, as were our immigrant forefathers.

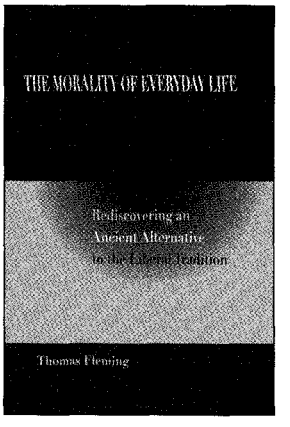
Steven Greenhut

The Morality of Everyday Life: Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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Pure Personality

The Meaning of Francisco "Pancho" Villa

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Only recently, I learned that the community of Columbus, New Mexico, U.S.A., is home to Pancho Villa State Park, which lies immediately south of town. Since I lived in Las Cruces, 80 miles away by road, for two years in the late 90's and have paid more than one visit to Columbus and the Mexican hamlet of Las Palomas across the international line, where I had a beer or two under the faintly suspicious gaze of the *tabernero* and a few solitary drinkers, how I managed to miss Pancho Villa State Park is something of a mystery, the equivalent of overlooking a putative Mohammed Atta State Park at Ground Zero. The website suggests it hardly amounts to much, like Columbus itself—a drab relic from postmodern America's reprobated frontier past (population approximately 1,700 souls) that survives like the billion half-dead cactus plants on the flat creosote bush and sotol desert surrounding the town. One wonders to what extent the city fathers who agreed to—or, more likely, lobbied hard in Santa Fe on behalf of—the park were acquainted with the details of the story of General Villa's raid on Columbus on the night of March 8, 1916: Before September 11, 2001, it was the sole armed invasion of the continental United States since 1812. For those with a sketchy knowledge of the affair, here are a few facts.

For 90 years, historians have argued Pancho Villa's purpose in attacking Columbus. The most likely ones were: to embarrass his rival for the Mexican presidency, Venustiano Carranza, who was finally supported by Woodrow Wilson after his early enthusiasm for Villa had waned; to provoke the United States into foolishly invading Mexico ("The United States wants to swallow Mexico; let's see if it doesn't get stuck in their throats"); and to create a wave of antigringo feeling throughout the northern states that would recreate, through enlistments, Villa's old División del Norte and revive Villismo as the most powerful political movement in the region. (Another, more proximate, explanation is Pancho Villa's hatred for gringos, in general, and Wilson, in particular, after the President allowed General Calles's army to be reinforced from the Arizona side of the border, thus ensuring Villa's defeat at the Battle of Agua Prieta in November 1915. "From this moment on," he swore, "I will devote my life to the killing of every gringo I can get my hands on and to the destruction of all gringo property.") Speculation aside, the historical record describes Villa pulling his little army of 399 men out of the town of Namiquipa in Chihuahua State on a northward march to a destination unknown to the troops, traveling mainly by night and keeping cold camp to avoid betraying their presence to the local villages and whatever Carrancista forces might be in the vicinity.

The Centaur (so nicknamed in recognition of Villa's superb horsemanship) took whatever civilians he happened upon prisoner; later, he released the Mexican ones but maltreated or executed the gringos. By the evening of March 6, the army found itself only a few miles south of the border. That night, a party of soldiers brought into camp the hysterical widow of an American rancher, resident in Mexico, whom they had shot to death on the steps of his house after he had spotted them at a distance. The woman, Maude Wright, was kept with the army for a few days and later released to tell her story.

The gringos the Villistas encountered the following day were not so lucky. Villa was in camp drinking coffee when he spied three riders sitting on their horses on a rise a few hundred yards away. One of the men waved in recognition, and then all three put their horses forward and rode on toward the camp. While the other two watched from a distance, the first rider trotted straight up to the campfire where Villa sat cross-legged on the ground. He was Arthur McKinney of the Palomas Land and Cattle Company and an old acquaintance of Pancho Villa. McKinney asked cordially how the revolution was going. Villa told him it went very well and ordered one of his men to pour Señor McKinney a cup of coffee. The two men continued to chat about this and that, while the cowboys at a distance smoked cigarettes from the saddle. Suddenly, Villa remarked in a conversational tone, "You know, Arturo, I'm making war against the gringos, too, and I guess I'll just start right here with you." Quick as a rattlesnake, a Villista looped a strand of barbed wire around the American's neck. McKinney, thinking it was all a joke, was starting to laugh when his eyes bulged and his tongue protruded. The other end of the tightened wire went over a cottonwood branch and McKinney was lifted, kicking and spinning, from the ground while the tin cup he had been drinking from rolled in the dust. Seeing this, his colleagues took a deep seat and galloped away. They were roped from their saddles before they had gone a hundred yards and dragged to death behind their own horses by the Villistas. The following night, General Villa and his army attacked Columbus and Camp Furlong, where a U.S. garrison was posted, going in at 4:45 in the morning. They killed 17 Americans and set fire to the town, losing over 100 men themselves and failing in their attempts at robbing the stores and bank and obtaining arms from the garrison's arsenal. Even so, the attack on Columbus did fulfill the Centaur's larger purpose, greatly enhancing his personal prestige and reviving Villismo in northern Mexico.

It would be natural to conclude that the honor paid to this man by the creation of an American state park in his name reflects the demography of present-day Columbus (83.3 percent Hispanic, 45.9 percent foreign born, 45.8 percent Latin American origin), were it not for the fact that Pancho Villa has been a legendary figure for many Americans as well as for most Mexicans, from his time down to our own. John Reed,

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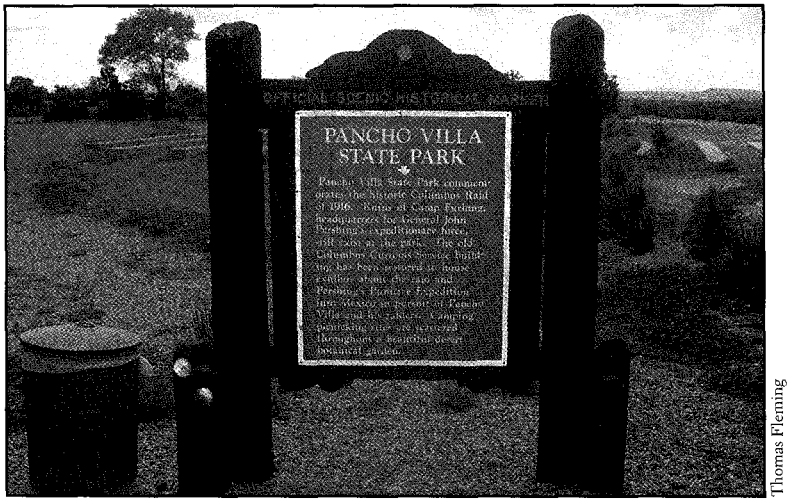
who worked as a news correspondent in Mexico during the early years of the Mexican Civil War and knew the general intimately, believed that Villa was laying the groundwork for a socialist society in Chihuahua. His dispatches were avidly read by President Wilson, who invited Reed to the White House, where he intimated a desire to see Pancho Villa elected President of Mexico in the interests of agrarian reform. Mary Jones, the organizer for the United Mine Workers of America, adored Villa, who once proposed to Wilson a prisoner exchange in which Mother Jones would be swapped for the Centaur's old enemy, Luis Terrazas, Jr. Tom Mix, another admirer, traveled from Hollywood to the battlefields of Chihuahua State, where the Mutual Film Company was recording Villa's troops (and the Centaur himself) in action and making an almost wholly fictitious movie, *The Life of General Villa*. And Ambrose Bierce, after crossing the Rio Grande from El Paso to Ciudad Juárez, rode south with Villa and later became an actual combatant in the battle of Terra Blanca, in which he is said to have killed a federal soldier. According to a Mexican army engineer who knew Villa well, Bierce was eventually murdered on orders from the general after he insulted Villa at dinner and threatened to go over to the Carrancistas.

Traveling by bus on Federal Highway 85 from Juárez to Ciudad Chihuahua some months ago, I experienced a frisson myself on beholding the vast Chihuahuan Desert, gazing between its blocky ranges of naked rock lifted above the creosote plain into the mysterious reaches beyond, where the hard-riding Villa with his Villistas had pursued his bloody career as "social bandit" and lain up for weeks in the Cueva de Cozcomate, nursing a knee wound suffered in the battle of Ciudad Guerrero on the long retreat south from the border following the attack on Columbus. (From this cave, through a screen of desert brush, Villa observed Pershing's Punitive Expedition crawl past, within hailing distance on its 400-mile trek south of the border in determined but fruitless search of him.) In Ciudad Chihuahua, by far the most interesting museum is Casa Villa, which is run by the Mexican war department. Here, Villa himself lived for a year as governor of the province in company with his official "widow" from among his many "wives," Doña Luz Corral de Villa, who remained there from shortly after his death in 1923 until her own in 1981. Among the exhibits is the black Dodge touring car, riddled from behind with .44 slugs, in which Pancho Villa and all but one of his entourage were assassinated in Parral, probably on orders from one of his political rivals—most likely Alvaro Obregón or Plutarco Elías Calles.

Frank McLynn, author of the excellent and highly readable *Villa and Zapata: A History of the Mexican Revolution*, opines that Pancho Villa was a great man. The enigma of a charismatic and forceful leader who was capable of mercy and generosity but just happened to be part monster as well is, of course, not easy to resolve, if indeed it is capable of resolution. Lord Acton, who believed that "It is the office of historical science to maintain morality as the sole impartial criticism of men and things," also has this to say regarding the business of judging greatness in historical personages and disposing of them accordingly: "Suffer no man and no cause to escape the undying penalty which history has the power to inflict on wrong." By contrast, Herbert Butterfield, criticizing what he called the Whig interpretation of history, while conceding that the historian's job is not to exonerate, argued that "neither is it for him to condemn. It greatly clears his mind if he can forgive all sins without denying that there are sins to forgive; but remembering that the problem of their sinfulness is not really a historical problem at all." Acton viewed disapprovingly Madame de Staël's maxim that "We forgive whatever we truly understand." In the case of Pancho Villa, McLynn—probably wisely, and more in the spirit of Butterfield than Acton—concludes that Villa suffered from an unintegrated personality, lacking a psychological middle ground between murderous rage and maudlin, often tearful, sentimentality. However that may be, one thing, I think, we must grant Pancho Villa: He was pure personality, as Henry Adams said Theodore Roosevelt was pure act—and personality, really, is the first requisite to being a realized human being at all. A few men loved him; more than a few hated him; many more feared him; and as many—often the same ones—respected him. He did much harm in his life and accomplished little, if anything, that outlived him; yet the historical record of his country is a far more interesting and colorful document than it would be had Francisco Villa (born Doroteo Arango Villa) never lived. Herbert Butterfield likely would have agreed.



Thomas Fleming

"Alongside Moctezuma and Benito Juárez," Friedrich Katz, author of the definitive *Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, argues, "Pancho Villa is probably the best-known Mexican personality throughout the world." And it is entirely fitting that he should be so, since Villa—as a man, as a hero, and as a villain—was quintessentially Mexican, the individual embodiment of the collective soul of his people. His followers and admirers loved in him what the Mexican loves; those who opposed and loathed him did so in the way that only a Mexican can hate. Thus, John Reed, Tom Mix, Ambrose Bierce, and Mother Jones, though certainly they sympathized with the man and possibly even understood something of his complex nature, seem hardly to have regarded Pancho Villa as his devoted Mexican compatriots and lieutenants did.

Villa differed profoundly from his foreign enthusiasts; he did not differ significantly from his Villistas or their various rivals, the Carrancistas, Obregónistas, Orozquistas, Zapatistas, *etc.*, in nature, but rather in the scale on which that nature was built. (The exception is Francisco Madero, the gentle, determined, but ineffectual Westernized liberal intellectual who began the revolution by deposing President Díaz in 1911 and was assassinated two years later by his commander in chief, Gen. Victoriano Huerta.) McLynn's reading of Pancho Villa's

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Distant appreciation, not importation, is the appropriate response to the culture of that dark and vast enigma stretching south of the Rio Grande, in the beauty of its gravelly deserts, its beckoning fins of purple rock and crimson bergs, ground to a fine edge like the blade of an Indian hatchet.

personality—that it was fundamentally an unintegrated one—holds for the generalized Mexican personality as well. The history of the Mexican Civil War, which commenced in 1910 and did not really end until the assassination of President Obregón in 1928 (he was shot six times in the face at close range during his birthday party in a Ciudad Méjico restaurant by a young, right-wing Catholic student who had been allowed to approach the presidential table in order to fill in the sketch of Obregón he had begun while sitting at the back of the room), catalogues the most appalling cruelties and atrocities, in which acts of bravery, but few of real heroism, are distinguishable. It is important to remember that, the federal troops from Ciudad Méjico excepted (and many of these, too, were impressed), most of the troops that made up the various contending armies were volunteers (including women, the *soldaderas*), augmented by impressment, not professional soldiers. The Mexican Civil War, like our own War Between the States, was fought by the Mexican peasantry and the Mexican proletariat, such as it was in those days—that is to say, by the great *mestizo* mass of the Mexican people, inheritors of a tradition of casual violence and thoughtless cruelty derived from both their Indian and their Spanish ancestry. Pancho Villa was distinguishable from his fellow Mexicans chiefly by his horsemanship, his nearly uncanny skill with a revolver (he could toss his weapon in the air, catch it as it fell, and, holding the gun upside down, knock an orange out of a tree at 30 paces), and his authority, exercised by force of personality, not by his semi-outlaw status, acts of mayhem, and murderous temper. Rodolpho Fierro, one of Villa's most trusted lieutenants and his unofficial executioner who regularly begged his chief to "give" him the latest unfortunate whom Villa had determined should be "started walking toward the cemetery," once carelessly drew his revolver and shot to death a passerby on a Juárez street so as to win a bet he had with his companion that a man killed by a bullet falls forward rather than backward. Fierro's own end came at the hands of his fellow Villistas, who deliberately let the saving lasso fall short as he and his horse struggled in the fatal quicksands of a shallow lake.

It is easy to explain this by saying that a violent man naturally attracts other violent men to himself and to his cause—easy, but, in the context of the Mexican Civil War, irrelevant. In the little town of San Pedro de las Cuevas, seething over his disastrous defeat a few days before at the hands of General Calles at the Battle of Agua Prieta, Villa ordered his men to kill every male, man or boy, of whom there were 60, for the reason that a great many of that village's residents were named Calles. (He personally shot the Catholic priest on the steps of his church when the man tried to intercede on behalf of his parishioners.) And at Torreón in November 1916, Villa was met as he rode victorious into the city by a woman who pleaded with him to spare her husband, the Carrancista paymaster. Villa investigated, learned that the man was already dead, and so informed the widow who, becoming enraged, accused the general of killing her husband and defied him to kill her, too. Villa shot her dead, then gave his Villistas leave to shoot all the other "bitches" who supposedly had collaborated with the despised Carrancistas. In consequence, 90 women were murdered by firing squad. (Even in the Mexico of 1916, this atrocity was too great to escape condemnation, with the result that Villa forfeited most of his hard-regained popular support.) Of this episode, McLynn writes: "There was a new brutality evident in Villa from this moment on. . . . As in the rest of Mexico, violence begat violence and six years of non-stop warfare had extinguished most traces of humanity and provided a kind of socialization in barbarism." That may well be true. Yet three years earlier, when the war had been going on for as many years, an assassination of stupendous brutality had occurred 700 or 800 miles away in the capital, with Huerta's treacherous coup. Having invited Gustavo Madero, the President's brother, to lunch with him at Restaurante Gambrinus, the general asked to borrow Gustavo's revolver, which he immediately pointed at the other man's breast, telling him he was under arrest. Removed to the Ciudadela, Gustavo was found guilty of treason by a kangaroo court. On his way from "court" to another part of the Ciudadela, rebel soldiers assaulted him, and one soldier stabbed Gustavo with his sword in his good eye. Wholly blinded and bleeding profusely, Madero staggered about while the gathered mob taunted him uproariously. Gustavo Madero was dispatched minutes later by a conspirator with a revolver, on the way to the firing squad. Three days later, Francisco Madero was driven to the penitentiary and executed by a single shot to the neck as he stepped out of the car.

In the end, Pancho Villa left no legacy beyond his romantic revolutionary legend. Villa directly reflected the chaos of the society into which he was born and in which he lived, and it is impossible for even the greatest of men to leave a lasting mark on chaos. On the other hand, he was a fascinating man who lived a fascinating life, in times that were fascinating even by the standards of a fascinating and strangely attractive country. To non-Mexicans, at least, Mexico is a mystery—and not just for gringos: Think of Graham Greene and, more improbably, Evelyn Waugh. Mexico is basic, Mexico is real: Therefore, however paradoxically, Mexico is fathomless. For Americans, Mexico's proximate Western neighbors, the lesson seems especially clear. Distant appreciation, not importation, is the appropriate and prudent response to the culture belonging to that dark and vast enigma stretching south of the Rio Grande, in the beauty of its gravelly mesquite deserts, its beckoning fins of purple rock and crimson bergs, ground to a fine edge like the blade of an Indian hatchet. ◁

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Immigration, the Border, and the Fate of the Land

Notes on a Crisis

by Gregory McNamee

Gregory McNamee

One hundred and seventy miles southwest of Tucson, hard by the Mexico line, stands a weathered mountain range called the Cabeza Prieta. It is a place of weird landforms and scarce but formidable vegetation, a graduate school for desert rats that only the best prepared dares enter. The geography of the place says, *Stay away*. To emphasize the point, the sky rains metal as military aircraft drop payloads of bombs and spray rivers of bullets onto the vast proving ground in which the Cabeza Prieta stands.

Yet, even here, a sea of trampled backpacks, electrolyte-drink bottles, underpants, toothbrushes, and cigarette butts stretches south toward the international border, lapping at the mountains' dry flank. A small city's worth of shoeprints punctuates every wash and pass: cowboy boots, tennis shoes, huarache sandals, even high heels. They are all pointed north, leaving a broad avenue through a desert that, absent the occasional bomb crater, was, until recently, as pristine as any in North America, so much so that environmental activists in Arizona long pressed for it to be given national-monument status, with its attendant protections. That will not happen, not while the Cabeza Prieta is a war zone, not while the sea rises and rises.

It is the same in San Diego, in Marfa, in Laredo, in Columbus. The southern frontier of the United States, from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico, is a battleground, its territory contested by a vast army of would-be immigrants facing a much smaller, but still numerous, host of soldiers, police officers, and other defenders. To call the land a battleground is by no means metaphorical, as it once would have been, for ever-larger portions of the border are being fortified and armored. The flanks of the Ajo Mountains, not far from the Cabeza Prieta by southwestern standards, bear concrete and steel *chevaux-de-frise* that would not be out of place on the Normandy beaches in 1944, while the steep canyons of the Coastal Range north of Tecate, Mexico, bear rank after rank of concertina wire.

Where the fortifications are not so sturdy, the sea has broken through. The case of the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, in south-central Arizona, is representative. Comprising 118,000 acres of high-desert grassland, the refuge harbors several rare plant types such as the Pima pineapple cactus, along with many species of animals, including pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, masked bobwhite, and other creatures not often seen elsewhere. Yet the refuge's officers have few resources to protect these animals and plants; instead, a full third of its annual budget of about $1.5 million goes to law enforcement, while much of the rest is eaten up by such mundane details as removing trash—500 tons of it in 2005—and carting away abandoned vehicles, dozens of which lie scattered across a no man's land of dry washes and sandy hills. Add to them the foot traffic of as many as 3,000 *alambristas*, or "wire-hoppers," per day and an endless stream of Border Patrol vehicles, ranging from all-terrain buggies to massive Humvees, and the land, once far from the center of anything in particular, once pristine, too, looks as if it has been chewed up by a wood chipper and spat out along the flanks of the rocky Baboquivari Range.

Three thousand may be a low estimate. Indeed, no one knows how many men, women, and children cross the international frontier illegally each day. However it is measured, the number is massive. We can extrapolate to some extent from federal statistics, which reveal that, in 2005, Arizona's two Border Patrol sectors apprehended 577,500 illegal aliens, nearly half of the nationwide total. If a million are being caught each year, then it stands to reason that many more are slipping through, eventually making their way to Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Antonio—and, from there, to Virginia, North Dakota, Vermont, wherever there is work to be found. Indeed, accord-

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ing to some estimates, there are now 11 million illegal immigrants in the United States, most Hispanic, most concentrated along the southern border—but with perhaps a million apiece in North Carolina, Illinois, and New York.

Few illegal entrants take the risk of going home only to find themselves shut out, and so they stay. The only thing that will keep crossers from the fragile, open desert is to restore border cities as the natural point of passage. Either that, or build a wall too high to jump, an immodest proposal that has been making the rounds.

Why should so many people cross over such difficult terrain each year? Never mind the motivations—and never mind the value judgments—about why they come in the first place. It has to do with aspiration, with the have-nots wanting to live where the haves are. It has to do with dreams. It has to do at times with repression, at times with greed. The chief reason that illegal crossers enter the United States through seemingly forbidding yet environmentally sensitive portals is that it is a matter of federal policy that they do so. In the 1990's, the Border Patrol seems to have determined that immigrant traffic through the normal ports of entry—that is, places such as Nogales, El Paso, and National City—was too vast and visible for comfort; it made for bad press when TV crews showed up and had to wait no time at all to film a wave of *alambristas* hopping walls and fording rivers to enter the United States, usually uncontested. The Border Patrol therefore massed agents in those cities, driving would-be migrants out into the remote, unpatrolled desert along the length of the border. Gone are the days of cross-border tunnels from one urban house to another; gone are the days of convenient television footage. Now, the bulk of seizures of contraband and arrests of illegal entrants takes place in the wild country, far from the restaurants, bars, and other amenities that, uncharitable though it may be to say, make a frontier law-enforcement officer's life a little more bearable.

Whether morale boosting and staff retention—or mere convenience—underlay the federal government's decision is arguable, but the effects have been marked. One is the destruction of great tracts of land, public and private, along the international frontier. Another, better noted in the media, is the appalling number of deaths each year in the desert, as naive crossers from better-watered climes take their *coyotes*, their smugglers, on faith that the big city lies just across the line. Women, many dressed in high heels and city clothes, make up a large percentage of the dead.

The Border Patrol's decision—memorialized as the Southwest Border Strategy in 1994—to restrict illegal immigration to the remotest and most difficult areas had a logic, of course. Seven years later, the General Accounting Office summarized the strategy as making it "so difficult and costly for aliens to attempt illegal entry that fewer individuals would try." As anyone who watched the numbers of crossers climb in the 1990's in response to sweeping economic changes in Mexico could tell, that goal was never met. Quite the reverse: Despite expense and hardship, more and more individuals are trying, and more and more are succeeding. The land bears witness, as remote places such as Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument are overrun by agency decree.

There are remote places, and there are remote places. Nogales is a supremely busy border port, but it is far enough away from the center of things that it takes a walker ten days to arrive in Phoenix, where a large job market for unskilled workers exists. That does not stop walkers from making the trek. Only a few miles west of Nogales, the sheer rock walls of the Atascosa Mountains make a formidable barrier to travel; the lowlands even farther west are laced with river and stream channels that make for far easier passage, even though it is through an unforgiving desert. Neither geographical fact deters crossers. Put an overly burdened Border Patrol to watching all that territory, and you are already set for failure—for *alambristas*, it seems, will take any risk to cross just about anywhere. All the technology at the agency's disposal—motion sensors and motion-activated lights, trip wires, closed-circuit televisions, aerial drones—has not lessened their numbers, any more than technology slowed progress on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Yet, at least until very recently, the agency seems to have preferred technology to boots on the ground, with the result that, for many years, the border has been essentially open.

The recent crackdown in the countryside has had a few documentable effects. One is to keep illegal immigrants in, for, when crossing becomes as challenging as it now is, involving not border cities but vast tracts of desert and mountains, then undocumented aliens who successfully enter simply do not leave, as they once did—working for a few months, then returning to their towns and villages to live until the money ran out, then crossing over again. Having won the *alambrista* lottery, few take the risk of going home only to find themselves shut out, and so they stay. The only thing that will keep crossers from the fragile, open desert is to restore border cities as the natural point of passage. Either that, or build a wall too high to jump, an immodest proposal that has been making the rounds.

Those who come here are, for the most part, unskilled laborers. Most are poor. And after their arrival here, most of the unskilled immigrant poor remain poor, working the low-end service jobs that homegrown workers are said not to want. They drive the substandard vehicles available to them through the secondhand market, vehicles that are minimally maintained and, in the immediate future, are likely to be gas-guzzling behemoths ditched by panicked suburbanites in favor of hybrids and motorbikes. (Watch, soon, for an appalling increase in the number of traffic fatalities nationwide as these vehicles swell the roads.) They live in substandard housing whose owners

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have not found it convenient to install energy-efficient appliances. That housing lies far from city centers, which are now being reclaimed by two groups of middle-class people: young professionals who find city life congenial and older "empty nesters" who find that being able to walk to grocery stores, pharmacies, and cultural events outweighs home ownership in the distant suburbs. Many cities are already experiencing white flight in reverse: In Atlanta, in New York, in Washington, in San Francisco, downtown is increasingly a place of wealth, safe and clean, while the distant suburbs are filling with the poor. One look at the sprawl and ruin that is greater Los Angeles, from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Pacific Ocean 150 miles west, suggests the future of an urbanized nation, a *Blade Runner* state in which the Darwinian struggle holds center stage.

These are just some of the environmental effects, broadly speaking, of these millions of new arrivals. But another set of environmental effects caused by illegal immigration along the border, just as troubling, is the product of the government's response to it. Faced with the problem of a very long border and too few people to guard it, government agencies of various sorts are busily building a high-tech, multiply cordoned Great Wall along the border—at least at points where access is convenient. Plans are being made to extend it from ocean to ocean. One scenario for western Arizona envisions a concertina-wire-topped fence at the international line, followed by a moat, followed by a steel wall, followed by a no man's land of loose gravel and low-strung wires, followed by another fence, followed by a control road patrolled by robotic vehicles. (If that sounds to you like the creepiest science fiction, then you are not alone.) Farther to the west, near San Diego, the Department of Homeland Security has proposed terraforming large tracts of land along the California-Mexico border, filling in canyons, shaving off ridge lines, and raising a triple fence of concrete and barbwire. The California Coastal Commission rejected that plan, but it is being revised, even as ostensibly conservative U.S. representatives from Southern California have taken the side of DHS against state authorities on the matter of sovereignty.

Certain state agencies in Arizona and New Mexico have called for a less fearsome fence, low but electrified, that would surely be less expensive to build if no less difficult to maintain. Their sense of fiscal responsibility is laudable, but, as would any barrier, this fence would disrupt another kind of migration: that of wildlife, which knows no international boundaries. Pronghorn, jaguars, wolves, coatimundi, bighorns—these and many other species require large areas in which to move freely. Before border policy pushed aspirant migrants into the deserts and mountains, the animals had just that room to roam. Now their habitat is vanishing. Any sensible discussion of what to do about the immigration problem will include recognition of their plight, for a homeland of empty ranges and silent trees hardly seems worth defending.

Is there any way to keep that flood of newcomers from crashing on these shores? Short of a militarized, environmentally neutral border, perhaps not. Not, that is, unless one of the environmental causes of immigration over the southern border is remedied: the collapse of private agriculture in Mexico as a result of the spectacularly ill-advised North American Free Trade Agreement. That treaty, signed under Clinton but endorsed by both Bushes, had the effect of making official Mexico's newfound role as America's southerly breadbasket, as the provider of fresh produce to New England in the dead of winter, of cheap foods to the rest of the continent at all times of the year. (The long distance from Mexican fields to Alaskan supermarkets is one reason, of course, that it takes 65 calories of fossil fuel to produce one calorie of food energy for the American market.) The treaty also helped complete the thoroughgoing industrialization of Mexican agriculture, introducing labor-saving, profit-maximizing machinery while removing people from the land—a sure cause of economic and social catastrophe in any farming community, as development economists will tell you.

Gregory McNamee

In the last decade, those displaced farmers have tended to move in two directions. Some have gone to the conurbation of Mexico City, the population of which is now unofficially estimated to be 30 million, a great part of which lives in oceanic wildcat slums that stretch from the capital for scores of miles. Others have gone to El Norte, where, if nothing else, the slums tend to be a touch more livable, the prospects a little better, and the cities less vast, at least for the time being. I was reminded of this recently when I complained about the size of Phoenix, which has a population of more than three million. A friend who lives in Los Angeles retorted, "Three million? That's fewer than the number of illegals here alone."

Faced with such conundrums, many environmentalists have chosen to remain altogether silent on the question of immigration, perhaps hoping that it will go away on its own. Immigration is, after all, a cyclical issue in American politics, one that rises and falls every 10 or 20 years. I have the feeling, though, that this time it will not disappear: There are too many ruined canyons, tracts of desert land, and streambeds for all that. So environmentalists must raise it. With 60 million poor and unemployed and a national debt in the trillions, the American lifeboat may well have sprung one too many leaks to allow more passengers, regardless of where they board.

If it is to take on more, determining just how will require informed, dispassionate debate on many fronts: social, economic, cultural, and environmental. If it is not, then the question remains how America is to become a fortress without walling herself off in the manner of a Chinese dynasty or Stalinist state, and without our becoming prisoners within. There are no easy answers.

In the meanwhile, what remains is to protect our garden. ◁

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How Santa Ana Became SanTana

An Irrelevant Border

by Steven Greenhut

Immigration is like so many other political issues in modern America: The official debate is quashed by political correctness, so the real issues fester under the surface while politicians deal in platitudes.

Currently, Americans trip over themselves saying how wonderful all immigrants are, whether they are here legally or not, and opinionmakers argue about whether to provide amnesty for those who came here illegally or to institute a guest-worker program that will lead to the same result: massive numbers of new, mostly Mexican, immigrants coming into the United States.

Meanwhile, below the surface of official debate, the public talks, in hushed tones, about what they see all around them. The sheer numbers of immigrants that have come here have dramatically changed the face of much of America, especially Southern California. The effects are not entirely bad, but there are many social, political, and cultural problems that have resulted. The city where I work, Santa Ana, epitomizes the dramatic and rapid immigration-driven changes, but such changes have affected the entire county.

That is Orange County, best known these days as the setting of such television shows as *The OC* and *Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County*. The fictional world portrayed on those shows certainly exists here. There is still a beach culture, in which wealthy young people behave as they are portrayed on these shows—not necessarily a good thing. Drive past the hip shops on the Pacific Coast Highway in Corona del Mar, or hang out at the bars in downtown Huntington Beach, and you will see it. Anyone who thinks that most of the OC resembles that world, however, is kidding himself.

In 2004, Joel Rubin reported in the *Los Angeles Times* that Orange County had officially become a majority-minority county "where steady growth in Asian and Latino populations has dramatically changed a once-homogeneous landscape" ("O.C. Whites a Majority No Longer," September 30). That fact, in itself, is not so shocking, given that many new immigrants are middle class and their children are highly assimilated. But that reality of success and assimilation—the only reality that politicians talk about—is just one part of the picture. The other reality is described by Amin David, a local Latino activist quoted in the *Times* article: "Come to Santa Ana and watch the kids trudge back to their tenement housing. That's the kind of Orange County we have. It is not the sand dunes you see on TV."

Although I would disagree with the goals of such activists—higher taxes to fund more social programs for the poor immigrants who congregate in Santa Ana, Anaheim, Garden Grove, and other parts of the OC—I cannot disagree with David's description, at least as it applies to the older, central part of the county. As Rubin points out, Orange County was 86-percent non-Latino white in 1970; it is now 49.5-percent non-Latino white. Those numbers will fall even more dramatically, as the Latino population is much younger than the white population—the median age of Latinos is 25; of whites, 40. It is largely a poor population, fueled by immigration. In neighboring Los Angeles County, the minority population is 70 percent—not the *city* of Los Angeles, but the entire county, with a population of ten million. In suburban Riverside County, the white population is 48.5 percent, and, in suburban San Bernardino County, it is 40 percent—and falling.

Obviously, massive and rapid demographic change is leading to massive and rapid cultural, political, and social change. Santa Ana, with over 330,000 residents (some estimates, taking into account illegal immigrants, put the number above 500,000), is the seat of Orange County, yet it is 86-percent Latino and has the largest Spanish-speaking population of any large city in the country.

The first time I took my family to Tijuana, my kids were terribly disappointed. "I thought you said we were going to a different country," my middle daughter told me. I realized that what she was seeing looked no different from what she sees in Santa Ana and other cities in Southern California. After all, downtown Santa Ana's business district has been renamed the Fiesta Marketplace, and it resembles the downtown district in any decent-sized Mexican city. Very little English is spoken, and there is the usual array of immigration services, health clinics, variety stores, and cowboy-hat-wearing vendors selling *churros*.

Some of this is great. I enjoy culturally diverse areas, love Mexican food, and have fun shopping in these places. I know that immigrants have always congregated in different communities and have always had an effect on the new culture. Yet what happens when the influx of immigrants is so great that entire regions are transformed from one culture to another? What happens when there is no halt to the waves of immigrants, no chance for assimilation to take place? Walk beyond the well-kept downtown area into Santa Ana's surrounding neighborhoods, and the reality starts to sink in.

In another *Los Angeles Times* article from 2004 ("The Hard Life—Santa Ana Style," by Michael Anton and Jennifer Mena, September 5), we read that

> Santa Ana topped a list ranking "urban hardship" among the nation's largest cities. By weighing a variety of social and economic indicators, researchers at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government concluded that

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> Santa Ana—where most people have a roof over their head and manufacturing jobs have been added—was the nation's toughest place to survive. . . . [T]he quality of life in Santa Ana is shaped by a huge number of Latin American immigrants who work multiple jobs, sleep on couches and struggle with the high housing costs and a lack of education.

Unlike many parts of Los Angeles, most of Santa Ana is relatively tidy. Yet, as Heather MacDonald wrote in her 2004 *City Journal* article "The Immigrant Gang Plague,"

> [A] seemingly innocuous block in Santa Ana can host five to eight households dedicated to gangbanging or drug sales. A front yard may be relatively trash-free; inside the house, [it is] a different matter entirely, says Santa Ana cop Kevin Ruiz. "I've been to three houses just this week where they made a mountain of trash in the backyard or changed their baby's diaper by throwing it over the couch." Fifty-year-old men are still dressing like chollos (Chicano gangsters), Ruiz says, and fathers are ordering barbers to shave their young sons bald in good gang tradition.

Even the city's ostensibly Mexican name has changed to accommodate the newcomers. The new, approved term is the Spanish contraction SanTana. The schools in Santa Ana—despite the city's "Education First" motto plastered on local water towers—are among the worst in the state, as teachers struggle with a population that does not speak much English. The school system has improved a bit since 2003, however, when voters from across the city recalled school-board member Nativo (his given name is Larry) Lopez, a Latino activist, who used his power to promote a "Spanish First" agenda. Still, no middle-class person (of any ethnicity) in his right mind would send his kids to these schools.

The demographic changes have led to unusual political battles. On June 20, 2006, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on an ongoing neighborhood disagreement between a 51-year-old white man named Tim Rush and his Latino neighbors ("Neighborhood Grouch or Savior? It All Depends," by Jennifer Delson). Over the course of two years, he called code enforcement 300 times to complain "about abandoned cars, illegal additions, garage conversions and music being played too loudly." His neighbors call him a racist for trying to clean up the neighborhood.

In this case, I side mostly with his neighbors. Certainly, some of the complaints Mr. Rush has made are legitimate ones, but neighborhoods take on the character of those who live there. It is unjust to use government to force, say, a working-class neighborhood to look and function as a neighborhood of wealthy professionals. Nonetheless, this dispute illustrates the dramatic changes that are taking place, neighborhood by neighborhood, throughout the greater-Los Angeles area. This is one of the few regions where there are increased pressures on infrastructure (roads, water lines, sewers) in built-out areas, as new immigrants double up and triple up in old tract houses. The result is a backlash, as old middle-class residents get angry at the changes that are taking place around them.

Many of the local political disputes these days are caused, at root, by immigration. Santa Ana's city council debates where Mexican vending trucks are to be allowed to park. Latino activists protest proposals by one of the county's municipalities and the county sheriff to check the immigration status of those arrested for serious crimes. Emergency rooms and trauma centers throughout the region are closing under the financial strain of serving a population that does not pay for medical services. Schools pass new bond initiatives to keep up with the costs of services for the growing population, most of whom are the children of immigrants, legal or otherwise. Residents bicker over daywork centers and other places where illegal immigrants congregate to solicit construction work. Republican strongholds are becoming Democratic strongholds.

The situation has replicated Third World development patterns. Wealthy people congregate along the beach areas depicted in the TV shows or move to the further reaches of the region and live in gated communities. Older areas become barrios. And, while the county remains mostly nice and middle class, a recent report shows that fewer than two percent of the homes sold in the LA/OC area are affordable by families with median incomes. A once-middle-class region is now becoming a county of rich and poor.

It is understandable when a poor man who cannot find decent work crosses the border in order to feed his family. But it borders on madness when a society—especially an advanced welfare state—willingly imports another country's poverty on such a large scale without counting the costs of such a transformation.

You cannot see that reality on *The OC*, but it's hard to miss in SanTana. ©

Eastertide, Poland
by Leo Yankevich

A sudden brightness. Call it day.
Rooks above the cathedral, and clouds
a thousand shades of morning grey,
while underneath: the coiling crowds
bear their pastries and precious fruit.
The cobble-stones shimmer in the rain
as 'glory, glory' the bells bruit
past the sinners along the lane.

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Islam, Immigration, and the Alienists Among Us

The Breadth of the Battlefield

by Wayne Allensworth

In his Introduction to *Orthodoxy: The Romance of Faith*, G.K. Chesterton casts himself as a man on a yacht seeking the world and finding home. The seeker, he writes, may have entertained us with his efforts to find "in an anarchist club or a Babylonian temple what I might have found in the nearest parish church." Chesterton had desired to be "in advance of the age," but found, instead, that he was "eighteen hundred years behind it." He had uncovered nothing new. The "romance of faith," he discovered, could be found in Christian orthodoxy.

Chesterton had thought of turning the seeker's tale into a "romance" in which the "English yachtsman" discovers what he takes as "a new island in the South Seas," planting a British flag on a "barbaric temple" that turns out to be the "Pavilion at Brighton." The seekers I am addressing here, however, are not those who traverse the globe (literally or figuratively) to land at home, either slaking a youthful wanderlust and returning to their native lands or, having become disillusioned after "seeing the world," realizing that "the world" is contained in the ordinary lives they left behind. The seekers who concern us are those who reject home, spiritually or intellectually, finding an elusive sense of identity in the barbarian temple itself. Or, in some cases, those who find a sense of purpose in what amounts to their own destruction.

A search of the World Wide Web yields some remarkable stories of such seekers from recent years.

In Texas, a woman reared in a Christian family told the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* that a prayer she offered in church led her to Islam. Struggling with the mysteries of faith and forgiveness, she prayed, "God, show me what this means or show me something else." The *Star-Telegram* reported that, "like many others who convert," this woman had said "she found that her new religion allowed her an understanding of God that previously seemed elusive." Islam, the paper stated, is a missionary religion. Indeed, it is—one that has been spread by fire and sword over several centuries.

Other Westerners have gone native while living in Islamic countries. Witness a report from *IslamForToday.com* dated November 25, 2001, just over two months after the terrorist attacks:

> The Italian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Torquato Cardeilli, has converted to Islam, the Italian embassy here announced Sunday . . .
>
> Following a close reading of the Holy Qur'an and study of Islamic culture, Cardeilli embraced Islam to become the first ambassador to convert to Islam in Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina, according to an office which handles conversions to Islam.
>
> Sheikh Nouh bin Nasser's office said the Italian ambassador converted to Islam on Nov. 15, the day before the start of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan . . . Saudi Arabia has in the past few years witnessed the conversion of more than 50,000 foreigners to Islam, the Saudi daily newspaper Oqaz reported.

But perhaps the strangest stories of Islamic conversions come from Russia, a country that has suffered from numerous terrorist attacks spawned by the war in Chechnya. With Islamic militancy spreading in the Land of the Firebird, one can read of Russian soldiers taken prisoner, converting, and joining the *jihad*—and of a Russian Orthodox priest's conversion. In *East European Constitutional Review* (Winter/Spring 2002), Dmitri Glinsky writes:

> [T]he expansion of Islam is clearly an unsettling phenomenon for most Russian observers and practitioners of cultural politics, for whom an undeniable link between ethnicity and religion has been a normative standard, an analytical framework, and a guide for political engineering. This deep unease is leading some of them to view the relationship between Christian Orthodoxy and Islam as akin to a zero-sum game. This impression is reinforced by such instances as the recent conversion of a onetime Christian Orthodox priest and public figure, Vyacheslav (nowadays Ali Vyacheslav) Polosin, who has himself turned into a missionary of Islam and its social teachings. Indeed, a sizable share of converts appears to be not just ethnic Slavs but spiritually disenchanted Orthodox Christians.

As I write, the five-year anniversary of September 11 approaches; in Britain, citizens of "South Asian" origin (or "home-grown" terrorists, as the British press depicted them) have been arrested for plotting to blow up a number of airliners in mid-flight to the United States. In Britain, the European Union, and the United States, the perils of importing the Other (in this case, Muslims) *via* mass immigration are finally beginning to be debated; and the stories of Americans and Europeans converting to Islam accumulate, even as the apologists for open borders continue to paint the Other as the equal of, or perhaps superior to, their countrymen.

Conversions by force of arms or a gradual absorption of one population by another, are, of course, nothing new under the sun. What is peculiar about the conversions of Westerners, in general, and Americans, especially, are the circumstances that may have spurred them on. In this "clash of civilizations," one of the striking trends has been the defense of the Other by some of the very people whom that alien force is attacking. I do not have in mind those who understand that Washington's Middle

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Contributing editor Wayne Allensworth writes from Keller, Texas.

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East policy (unquestioning support of Israel; the democracy-by-force plans of the Bush White House; the occupation of Iraq) has something to do with the popularity of Osama bin Laden. What I am getting at is something else entirely.

After the September 11 attacks, there was reportedly an increase in conversions to Islam in the United States, as well as a general increase in interest—not necessarily an attempt to "know your enemy" or to understand the "root causes" of the attacks—in all things Islamic. And our President, a man many Americans consider to be a devout Christian, assured us that "Islam is a religion of peace," despite ample evidence to the contrary. There was no backlash against Islam—domestically, at least. How this state of affairs came about can be explained in many ways: We may rage at Big Business globalism, driven by short-sighted greed; or blame "political correctness," the liberals, or religious universalism. These are merely symptoms of a deeper illness.

In my review in these pages of Paul Sperry's book *Infiltration* (February), I recounted the bizarre tale of John Walker Lindh. A cradle Catholic, Lindh had converted to Islam as a teenager. Lindh—or Suleyman al-Faris, or Abdul Farid, as he was also known—traveled to Pakistan in 2000, studying in an Islamic *madrash*. He joined the Taliban and met Osama himself, then won his fleeting moment of fame as the "American Taliban." Some hated Lindh, while others seemed to love him—or at least defend him. As I wrote,

> [I]t is questionable that John Walker Lindh ever had a strong American identity. The point that was missing in all the coverage was that Lindh's saga can only be understood within the context of what the Nixon Center's Robert S. Leiken has dubbed the West's "adversarial culture." Lindh is simply not worth hating. He is another pathetic example of a civilization that has lost confidence in itself and produces lots of people with a very shallow sense of identity. Apparently, Islam provided Lindh/Al-Faris/Farid with [one] . . .

While the mainstream right spun its wheels denouncing liberalism and Lindh's pathetic parents (his mother had reportedly "dabbled in Buddhism," while John's nominally Catholic father had thought his son's conversion good for him), it was missing the larger point:

> "[C]onservative" criticism [of Lindh's parents] never mentioned a capitalist culture, usually defended by the mainstream right, that inculcates a view of life as a series of consumer choices. It's a culture in which CEOs are encouraged not to think of their firms as American but "global." And Americans born and raised in the Good Ole U.S.A. replace their neighbors with "outsourced" foreigners and shop at "big-box" stores retailing Chinese-made goods, with hardly a single pang of conscience.
>
> In the 20th century, the West saw itself betrayed by the likes of Kim Philby, along with the other "Cambridge spies," and such groups as the Red Brigades, the Red Army Faction, and the Weathermen. The radicals and traitors had legions of sympathizers and fellow travelers in the elites of their own countries. Western individualism and rationalism, radicalized by the decline of Christianity; the curiosity of the Western mind, which lost its sense of context as it lost its religion; and a fascination with things foreign that is not quite like any that has been seen in other civilizations all contributed to the growth of a rootless, self-hating "adversarial culture," whose platform for attacking the civilization that produced it was Marxist-Leninist.

The "adversarial culture" is not the wholly owned subsidiary of what is nowadays called the "left"—the "right" is also attached to theories of Economic Man and the worship of Progress, something that *Chronicles* contributors have been writing about for years. The problem is not only ideological but structural: a postindustrial society not attached to the land, or even a company town, is going to have a very hard time putting down roots. And a rootless society with a shaky sense of identity will find it difficult to defend itself.

Gregory McNamee

So the problem is not limited to a few *alienist* (the term has been used as the antonym of *nativist* by immigration-reform advocates) cheerleaders. Because of open borders and an immigration policy enabling mass migration from non-Western states, the Islamic Other is here and offers another opportunity for the agents of adversarial culture to play out their multicultural, anti-Christian, antiwhite, anti-American fantasies. With many of its younger members having missed out on the fun and games of the "revolution" of the 60's, the current Party of Treason now identifies with the immigrant masses: The more alien, the more hostile, the more militant, the better. But they are not alone. Islam is growing in America—and not only among the John Walker Lindh imitators one would expect in our increasingly fragmented society. Could it be that Western alienists may have found the perfect vehicle to replace Marxism-Leninism in a militant, resurgent Islam?

Muslim militants, hoping to dodge any future profiling, are reportedly seeking out native-born Americans to do their dirty work. At the same time, an alarming number of Islamic converts are black Americans. Accounts of the Islamic recruitment of prisoners, however, are not limited to proselytizing blacks. "Latinos" and even East Asians are said to be targets. Given that normal patterns of socialization have been disrupted, there are plenty of Americans alienated from their traditional cultures and civilization. How can anyone hope to assimilate and socialize waves of immigrants from vastly different civilizations, when we have failed to socialize our own

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people? With the white, Christian majority designated the perpetrator of countless genocides and unmatched oppression, it is small wonder that racial minorities, encouraged by the cult of victimhood, might find militant Islam attractive. If Al Qaeda can recruit a John Walker Lindh, how many Third World immigrants will sympathize with, if not join, the *jihad*?

Islam's comprehensive worldview, which does not recognize any division between religious and civic life, is, as Srdja Trifkovic argues, a telling indicator of its incompatibility with Western political systems. Citing terrorist cases involving American citizens and attitudes of Muslims toward the United States and the West, Trifkovic writes that "the application of political criteria in determining the eligibility of prospective visitors or immigrants to the US should become an essential ingredient of a long-term anti-terrorist strategy."

On *ChroniclesMagazine.org*, Trifkovic has further pointed to the feelings of alienation that Muslim immigrants and their progeny have indicated in polls taken after the July 7, 2005, terrorist bombings in London:

> According to a detailed survey of the attitudes of British Muslims prepared for the *Daily Telegraph* in the immediate aftermath of the London bombings . . . one in four sympathizes with the motives of the bombers, and six percent insist that the bombings were "fully justified." In absolute numbers, this means that there over 100,000 Muslims in Great Britain who either are prepared to carry out terrorist acts or are ready to support those who do. And a substantial majority—56 percent—say that whether or not they sympathize with the bombers, they can at least understand why they behave in this way. The sheer scale of Muslim alienation from British society that the survey reveals is remarkable: Nearly a third of them, 32 percent, believe that "Western society is decadent and immoral and that Muslims should seek to bring it to an end."

Other surveys cited by Trifkovic reveal that Muslim hatred for the United States is even worse: 81 percent of Pakistanis, for example, "dislike" America. In Lebanon, 73 percent believed that suicide bombings are justified. This is what Trifkovic described as the "baggage" Muslim immigrants bring with them to America and transmit to their children who are born here:

> The sense of hostile detachment from any recognizably American identity and values that breeds terrorist intent is not confined to any single group of Muslims. It transcends class and affects students, Ivy League-educated doctors, and criminals alike. The problem is not limited to those Muslims who came to the United States as adults: In December 2003, five U.S.-born Muslim youths from upstate New York were convicted of aiding Al Qaeda and plotting attacks on Americans.

What is unclear from all of this is the degree to which we are becoming *them* or they are becoming *us*. The sense of hostile detachment of upper-middle-class, American-born Muslims is as much a part of the culture of their white counterparts in those same Ivy League schools as of the Islamic culture their parents brought with them. Calling a halt to mass immigration is an absolute necessity. But having won that victory, patriots will have just begun to fight. ◈

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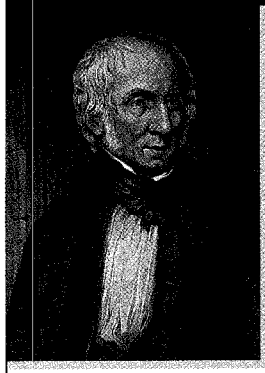

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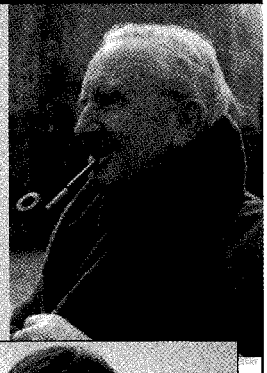

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North Korea and Iran

The Case for Formal Relations

by Ted Galen Carpenter

The United States faces twin crises involving nuclear proliferation, as both North Korea and Iran seem poised to barge into the global nuclear-weapons club. (There are indications that North Korea may have already done so, since she has processed enough plutonium to build as many as 13 weapons.) U.S. policy toward those two rogue states has followed a familiar pattern. Washington has no formal diplomatic relations with either country, and it has entered into negotiations with those regimes only with great reluctance and following intense prodding by long-standing U.S. allies.

It may be emotionally satisfying to refuse to recognize the current North Korean and Iranian governments, since one would be hard-pressed to identify two more odious regimes in the international system. Nevertheless, refusing to maintain any formal relationship with Iran and North Korea when those countries are poised to become nuclear powers is potentially very dangerous.

Washington has never recognized North Korea's communist regime since it seized power (with Moscow's assistance) after World War II. Any chance that U.S. leaders might adopt a more flexible policy disappeared when Pyongyang's forces attacked noncommunist South Korea in June 1950 in an effort to unify the peninsula under communism. Although the United States has occasionally negotiated with North Korea (most notably, the 1994 agreement freezing that country's nuclear program), the focus of U.S. policy has been to isolate Pyongyang diplomatically and maintain a system of rigorous economic sanctions. Even when Japan, China, Russia, and the major European powers recognized both Korean states following the end of the Cold War, Washington did not follow suit.

When the current nuclear crisis erupted in the autumn of 2002, the Bush administration refused to talk to Pyongyang. During the early months of the confrontation, Washington's position was unyielding: There would be no talks whatsoever until Pyongyang stopped violating the 1994 Agreed Framework and allowed outside inspections to verify that it was complying with all provisions of the agreement. When it became evident that North Korea was accelerating the revival of her nuclear-weapons program, China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea all urged Washington to drop its demand and talk to Pyongyang. The United States finally responded (especially to pressure exerted by our allies) and shifted tactics in early 2003. Following a meeting with Japanese and South Korean diplomats, the State Department announced that it would agree to direct talks with Pyongyang. U.S. officials stressed, however, that this would in no way constitute "negotiations."

Most experts found this to be a distinction without a difference. Eventually, Washington agreed to direct negotiations with Pyongyang, but only within a multilateral framework. Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program menaced North Korea's neighbors, Washington argued, so they should play a role in any diplomatic sessions. North Korea, in turn, insisted on bilateral talks with the United States. A compromise was reached in which all formal negotiations would take place within the framework of six-party talks (including Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea), but U.S. and North Korean delegates could conduct informal, bilateral "discussions" on the side. The six-party talks have dragged on for more than three years with meager progress.

Washington's relationship with Iran over the decades has been almost as rocky as its interaction with North Korea. After a coup orchestrated by the Central Intelligence Agency ousted a democratic government and restored the shah to his throne, Tehran and Washington became close allies for the next quarter century. That situation changed dramatically when an Islamic revolution drove the shah into exile in early 1979. A few months later, tensions rose dramatically when an Iranian mob (with the apparent connivance of the new government) stormed the U.S. embassy and took American diplomats hostage. They were not freed until January 1981, and the United States and Iran have had no formal diplomatic relations since the start of the hostage incident.

The lack of a formal relationship has become a significant issue since evidence began to mount in the past three years that Tehran was pursuing a program to develop nuclear weapons. Yet Washington made no move to engage the Iranian regime in negotiations or even substantive discussions. Indeed, until the spring of 2005, White House officials discouraged Britain, France, and Germany from negotiating with Iran on the nuclear issue. Washington reluctantly endorsed the diplomatic efforts of the "EU-3" only after extracting a commitment from them to support stronger measures against Tehran if diplomacy failed to produce the desired result. Despite prodding from London, Paris, and Berlin, the Bush administration steadfastly refused to participate in the ongoing negotiations.

Tehran's efforts to thaw relations with Washington also were rebuffed. In the months following September 11, the Iranian regime expressed a willingness to work with the United States to undermine the Taliban government and its Al Qaeda allies in Afghanistan. After initially exploring that possibility, the administration spurned the overtures. The degree of hostility directed against Tehran was reflected in President Bush's January 2002 State of the Union Address when he dubbed Iran, North Korea, and Iraq the "Axis of Evil." There was one more

Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, is the author or coauthor of seven books on international affairs, including The Korean Conundrum: America's Troubled Relations With North and South Korea *(Palgrave/Macmillan).*

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opportunity for a diplomatic breakthrough. Using intermediaries, the Iranian government reportedly proposed in early 2003 to turn over numerous Al Qaeda leaders whom Tehran was holding prisoner in exchange for Washington's willingness to begin the process of normalizing political and economic relations between the two countries.

Washington's reluctance to engage in any negotiations with Iran has eased only this past year. As recently as early May, the Bush administration seemed uninterested in any dialogue, even on the crucial nuclear issue. That was evident when Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sent a lengthy letter to President Bush—the first communication to an American chief executive from an Iranian head of state since the 1979-81 hostage episode. It was a curious document—a rambling 18-page treatise on history, religion, politics, and world affairs. As a foundation for serious, substantive negotiations on the Iranian nuclear crisis, the letter was decidedly inadequate.

Nevertheless, Washington's response was disappointing and shortsighted. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice dismissed the letter even before it had been translated. President Bush's reaction was not much better. He criticized it for not answering "the question the international community is asking"—namely, "when will Iran give up its nuclear program?" The White House emphasized that there would be no reply to the letter. In other words, unless Iran's leaders were willing to surrender on the issue that was the principal U.S. grievance, Washington was not interested in any dialogue with Tehran.

A few days following Ahmadinejad's letter, *Time* published an open letter from Hassan Rohani, representative of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khameini. That letter was considerably more focused and substantive than Ahmadinejad's effort and was another indication that the Iranians wanted meaningful discussions with Washington.

In early June, the Bush administration abruptly altered its position by agreeing to join the EU-3 negotiations with Tehran. The reason for that policy shift is not clear, but it is the first encouraging sign in decades. Yet one should not attach too much importance to Washington's apparent greater diplomatic flexibility. There is no indication that it will lead to anything even resembling a normal political and economic relationship between the two countries.

The North Korean and Iranian situations highlight a broader problem in the way the United States deals with difficult and repressive adversaries. One should have no illusions. The current North Korean and Iranian governments are brutal, hostile, and odious regimes. North Korea is little more than a giant slave-labor camp, and Pyongyang routinely imprisons, tortures, and executes people suspected of opposing communist rule in the slightest. Tehran's policy of supporting groups that use terrorist tactics is reprehensible, and Ahmadinejad's hateful screeds against Israel are both bizarre and repulsive.

The United States does not have the luxury of engaging only pleasant, democratic, and tolerant governments, however. One of the great challenges of effective diplomacy is to deal with, and get results from, regimes that most Americans would prefer not exist. Unfortunately, that is an unpleasant reality that seems to elude recent generations of U.S. policymakers.

Since the days of Woodrow Wilson, Washington's typical response to unfriendly, repressive governments (especially of small countries) is to isolate and berate them. Before Wilson, our general practice was to deal with any government that controlled a country, whether we liked the regime or not. That policy was far more realistic and productive. The current approach is akin to the maturity one would expect from an adolescent: "I don't like you, and I'm not going to speak to you."

That strategy has produced utterly unsatisfying results. For more than two decades after the end of the Vietnam War, Washington did not have diplomatic relations with Hanoi, even though Vietnam was a significant political and military player in Southeast Asia. We have pursued a similar policy of truculence toward Cuba for decades, without dislodging the Castro regime's grip on power.

We have adopted the same futile approach toward North Korea and Iran, even though both countries are on the brink of entering the nuclear-weapons club. Consider that for a moment: We have no relations with two countries that may soon have nuclear arsenals. That is not only foolish but profoundly dangerous. The lack of effective communication invites misunderstanding, miscalculation, and potential disaster.

Normalizing relations would at least reduce those dangers. As it is, Washington has no reliable mechanism even for gathering information from Tehran and Pyongyang. When North Korea showed signs of preparing to test a long-range ballistic missile in June 2005, Washington had to ask China to make inquiries on our behalf in order to find out what the payload was. If normal diplomatic relations existed, the White House could have instructed the U.S. ambassador in Pyongyang to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, express strong U.S. opposition to any missile test, and press him to disclose the nature of the payload and the purpose of the test: For example, was it intended to be a satellite launch or a military test?

In addition to enhancing dialogue and reducing the potential for miscalculation, formal diplomatic relations would give the United States greater opportunity to penetrate the host regimes and gather information. To put it bluntly, it would make it much easier to spy on these potential adversaries. As it is, the United States apparently has few, if any, intelligence operatives in North Korea and relies almost entirely on South Korea for such information. The meager spy network the United States had in Iran was reportedly rolled up a few years ago because of betrayal by a double agent. In short, Washington is largely operating blind in dealing with both nuclear crises.

Establishing embassies in Pyongyang and Tehran would give the United States far greater opportunities for espionage. The reality is that a significant number of U.S. diplomats posted in foreign countries are intelligence agents. The same would be true in Iran and North Korea if we had a diplomatic presence there. For that benefit, if no other, the United States should try to normalize relations with the two countries.

The standard objection is that it would confer legitimacy on odious regimes. By itself, diplomatic recognition in no way implies that Americans consider the other government to be moral and freedom loving. The United States has relations with China and Saudi Arabia—hardly paragons of political liberalism and enlightenment. Maintaining a diplomatic relationship merely accepts the reality (as unpleasant as it might be) that the government in question controls a country that is relevant (in a positive or negative way) to important American interests. The current political system in North Korea has been in power for more than 60 years; the one in Iran, for 27 years. As much as we might wish it were otherwise, it is time to make the best of bad situations. We should move to normalize relations with both countries as soon as possible. ◁©▷

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To Preserve the American Tribe

by Tom Piatak

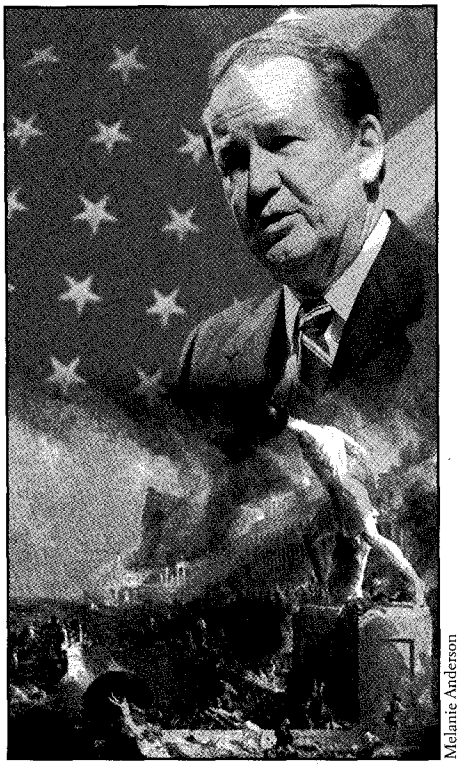
"A nation scattered and peeled . . . a nation meted out and trodden down."
—Isaiah 18:2

State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America
by Patrick J. Buchanan
New York: Thomas Dunne Books;
308 pp., $24.95

◆

"It will never be known what acts of cowardice have been motivated by the fear of looking insufficiently progressive." Pat Buchanan quotes this aphorism of Charles Péguy in his latest book, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*. If it were not already clear from the rest of his career, Buchanan's book shows that he—almost alone among national figures—is not cowed into silence by fear of offending our progressive elites. And neither are those writers whom Buchanan acknowledges and repeatedly cites in this book, including the late Sam Francis and several other editors of this magazine. Indeed, Buchanan has written a book every reader of *Chronicles* will enjoy. With crisp, vigorous prose and clear, logical argument, buttressed by wide reading and deep historical knowledge, he sets forth themes that have long been written about here, all in defiance of the shibboleths of multiculturalism and in service to the most important political cause in America: immigration reform.

Buchanan is blunt regarding the stakes in the immigration debate. He repeatedly refers to the current inundation of America with immigrants from Third World countries as an "existential crisis":



Melanie Anderson

> The existential crisis of Western civilization does not come from Islamic terrorism. . . . The crisis of the West is of a collapsing culture and vanishing peoples. . . . [I]f we do not shake off our paralysis, the West comes to an end.

In attempting to highlight a way out of this crisis, Buchanan ably marshals the arguments made by immigration reformers for years: that mass immigration constitutes "an injustice and betrayal of working men and women of America"; that "[w]e are headed toward a society and nation dangerously more polarized than the America of 1960"; that,

> [i]f Republicans believe that millions of largely uneducated, unskilled, and poor people are going to rally to a party that advocates slashing the size of government, the party is in need of a brain transplant.

He cites Chilton Williamson's argument that America "is going to be overrun and despoiled in 50 or 100 years because of the folly, greed, and dishonesty with which Congress has responded to the immigrant invasion."

The strength of Buchanan's book, however, does not lie in such economic, political, or environmental arguments but in its clear explanation of how the current mass immigration from Mexico is different from earlier immigrations and in its further development of two themes that have long characterized Buchanan's writing: a strong American patriotism and an equally strong disdain for liberalism in all its guises—from Manchester-style liberalism to neoconservatism to multiculturalism—which Buchanan sees, following James Burnham, as the "ideology of Western suicide."

Buchanan, of course, notes that many Mexican immigrants are coming here illegally and that our open southern border poses a grave security risk to the United States, providing a conduit for drugs, criminals, and perhaps even terrorists to enter the country. But he goes well beyond these staples of talk-radio rhetoric to explain why America must begin to limit this seemingly endless influx of people. He highlights the disturbing phenomenon of "sanctuary cities," which forbid their police "to arrest known illegal and

Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.

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criminal aliens"—sanctuaries whose existence we owe to immigrants who identify more with their fellow immigrants who are criminals than with the American victims of their crimes. Buchanan describes how the Mexican government is actively pursuing a policy of thwarting assimilation, providing for dual citizenship, encouraging Mexican immigrants to vote in Mexican elections, and using its 47 consulates in the United States to make certain that Mexican immigrants maintain their allegiance to the old country. This is one crucial difference between the Mexican immigration of today and the European immigration of the past: Austria-Hungary, for example, never had 47 American consulates working to ensure that her former subjects kept their allegiance to Franz Joseph.

The sheer size of the migration from Mexico also distinguishes this tsunami from earlier waves. The United States has never experienced such massive immigration from a neighboring country, concentrated in the area where the two countries are contiguous. Circumstances allow Mexican immigrants who do not wish to assimilate to remain essentially Mexican, living in enclaves surrounded by fellow Mexicans and constantly receiving reinforcements from their homeland. Buchanan recites an impressive array of statistics: One sixth of all Mexicans are already in the United States, and 46 percent of those remaining in Mexico want to come here. Young Hispanics are 19 times as likely to join a gang as young whites, and half fail to finish high school. One twelfth of all those apprehended at the border already have criminal records, and there have been 216 incursions by the Mexican military across the border in the last decade. One- to two-million immigrants (half of them illegal) are coming each year to the United States from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. And ten percent of the children born each year in the United States serve as "anchor babies."

With the United States government unwilling to act and Mexicans continuing to be drawn northward by an "income gap [that] is the largest between any two large neighbors on earth," there is no end in sight to this crisis. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there will be 102 million Hispanics in the United States by 2050—as many Mexicans as there are today in Mexico—concentrated mainly in the Southwest. The result may well be what Buchanan fears: "a sharing of sovereignty [in the Southwest] and [its] ultimate recapture, culturally and linguistically, by Mexico, no matter which nation holds title."

And there are other differences, too. Never before have so many immigrants arrived from a country with an historic sense of grievance against the United States: 58 percent of all Mexicans believe the Southwest rightly belongs to them. And, "[n]ot only do Mexicans come from a different culture, they are, 85 percent of them, mestizo or Amerindian. History teaches that separate races take even longer to integrate."

Buchanan's willingness to discuss race is likely to cause some leftist critics to accuse him of "racism," an emotional reaction akin to a Victorian lady's need for smelling salts after hearing a frank description of bodily functions. Buchanan quotes Sam Francis's aperçu: "In the Victorian era, the Great Taboo was sex. Today . . . [it] is race." Undaunted, he makes persistent reference to the gigantic demographic transformation mass immigration is beginning to work in the United States. In 1960—the last census taken before the Immigration Act of 1965—America was 89-percent white and 10-percent black. Today, the Census Bureau estimates that, by 2050, whites will be a minority in America.

Yet this book bears no trace of racial hatred, or even hostility toward immigrants. Buchanan describes Mexican immigrants as "a courteous, friendly, hard-working, likable people," adding that the racial transformation caused by mass immigration is significant for the reason that "multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual states are held together either by an authoritarian regime or a dominant ethnocultural core, or their breakup is inevitable."

Even so, Buchanan's concern stems from more than Burkean prudence and tradition, although these virtues amply justify opposition to a policy of mass immigration from the Third World. Pat Buchanan clearly loves his country, and so he wants her to retain the virtues of the America into which he was born, an America marked by strong patriotism, a coherent national identity, and a powerful common culture. These virtues are captured in Roger McGrath's evocative description of the Marines who took Tarawa as warriors of "the American tribe," one united not by abstract ideology but by culture, language, history, creed, common experience, and race. Buchanan, who believes that such bonds are real and enduring, quotes with approval Sam Francis's observation that "tribal behavior is what makes human beings human. Take it away from 'man' or 'humankind' and what you get is not 'pure man' or 'liberated man' but dehumanization."

Buchanan correctly emphasizes the extent to which mass immigration is transforming America and weakening the formerly strong bonds of the American tribe. As much as this emphasis discomfits neoconservatives and their "mainstream conservative" allies, meaningful immigration reform is unlikely unless the American people become convinced that mass immigration is doing more than depressing the wages of the working class or creating urban sprawl. Effective reform will only happen if Americans come to believe that mass immigration threatens to destroy the nation they love, or at least to change her irrevocably. The last President to reduce immigration substantially was Calvin Coolidge, who was motivated not by fine points of public policy but by his belief that "America must remain American."

Buchanan puts the blame for this chaos where it belongs: on "our unpatriotic elites who put money and power ahead of country and culture." Buchanan is particularly critical of the sort of liberalism that has captured the imagination of our elites and undermined conservative opposition to mass immigration—in particular, the "Economism Cult" that is so influential within the Republican Party and the belief, widely held by neoconservatives, that America is a "proposition nation."

Both fallacies seek to substitute an abstract ideology—a belief in markets, or in "equality"—for love of country. And neither can replace the bonds it is helping to destroy. As Buchanan writes, "Without patriotism, a love of country and countrymen not for what they believe or profess but for who they are, 'Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold.'" If the center does not hold and America does degenerate into "a souk of squabbling nationalities united by a common lust for consumer goods," it will be proof that not even the American tribe that so dominated the 20th century can survive its infection by the bacillus of liberalism.

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Agrarian Poetics

by Mark Royden Winchell

Given: New Poems
by Wendell Berry
Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard; 160 pp., $22.00

◆

Over the past four decades, Wendell Berry has been one of the most prolific writers in America, averaging around a book each year. Much of this output has been in the realm of poetry, for which he has been honored with the T.S. Eliot Award, the Aiken Taylor Award, the John Hay Award, and other lesser prizes. Unlike his fellow Kentuckian Robert Penn Warren, Berry has not yet come to be known as the General Pinochet of American Letters for the sheer weight of his medals. Still, the man has been lionized—particularly by anti-industrialists, who share his scorn for modernity if not his resolution to live an agrarian life. As a long-time farmer-poet, Wendell not only talks the talk; he walks the walk.

The problem with any individual who has become an institution or cultural metaphor is that a gap inevitably separates his reputation from his achievement. After all, Michael Jordan missed more shots than he made, and Babe Ruth held the major-league record for career home runs and strikeouts until he was superseded in both categories by Henry Aaron. By the same token, one is likely to find both hits and misses in a volume of poetry by Wendell Berry. When he is least effective, his verse reads like prose arranged in lines—it tells much, shows little, and sings not at all. If these qualities seem jarring, it is largely because a good Wendell Berry poem is very good indeed. Typically, such a poem contains sharp, even startling imagery and ends with an epiphany of sorts. It may be some profound revelation but can just as easily be a note of Frostian irony or an unexpected but convincing affirmation of the mundane.

Consider, for example, the understated brilliance of an early poem in Berry's most recent collection, *Given*. "The Rejected Husband" reads as follows:

> After the storm and the new
> stillness of the snow, he returns
> to the graveyard, as though
> he might lift the white coverlet,
> slip in beside her as he used to do,
> and again feel, beneath his hand,
> her flesh quicken and turn warm.
> But he is not her husband now.
> To participate in resurrection, one
> first must be dead. And he goes
> back into the whitened world,
> alive.

In the section *Sabbaths, 1998-2004*, which constitutes two thirds of the volume, I count about 30 poems of this quality.

In other poems, Berry achieves memorability through different but equally familiar techniques. "In Art Rowanberry's Barn," for example, paints a remarkably full portrait of a man simply by having a survivor catalogue what was found among his belongings after death. (The first time I recall seeing this device used was in J.D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*, when Zooey rummages through his parents' dresser.) The trick is to bring the list to a decisive closure. Berry does so with the following lines: "He found a good farrier's knife, / an awl, a key to a lock / that would not open."

If the voice in this poem sounds suspiciously like that of Robert Frost, the influence in "Burley Coulter's Song" more nearly resembles that of Thomas Hardy. The rustic scene of a country dance, remembered after many years, is perfectly rendered through an intricate but completely natural-sounding rhyme scheme. In fact, the rhythm of the dance and the poem are so well matched that we are apt to infer that an unambiguously happy moment is being recalled. But subtle differences suggest a darker undertone. At the end of the first stanza, the speaker asks his beloved if she remembers "how we danced / And how the fiddler played." At the end of the next stanza, he is reduced to recalling the memory of a memory on his own. Then, in the closing lines of the final stanza, the pall of melancholy is complete:

> The old time comes around me
> now,
> And I remember how you glanced
> At me, and how we stepped and
> swayed.
> I can't forget the way we danced,
> The way the fiddler played.

We are prepared for the final twist by just the slightest break in harmony in the enjambment "how you glanced / At me."

Yet another discernible influence is that of William Carlos Williams. The speaker in Berry's "The Future" sounds very much like the one in Williams' "Tract." The emphatic, even hectoring tone of voice elevates an otherwise pedestrian message from the level of prose to poetry. Moreover, the way in which the poem ends—in an unexpected direction—is typical of Berry at his best. Although it is not indicated by any change in punctuation, we seem to leave the speaker's voice (which exhorts us to do our small part to improve the world rather than speculate grandly about the future) to an objective description of the world that sounds as if it could have come from a modern translation of Ecclesiastes:

> . . . The Day is
> clear and bright, and overhead
> the sun not yet half finished
> with his daily praise.

Many other poems demand our attention, but, given the limitations of space, I will note only one: "Original Sin." This is a natural topic for a certain kind of visionary poet, but rarely has it been treated better—certainly not in Robert Penn Warren's much-anthologized poem of the same name and only slightly so in Edwin Muir's magnificent "One Foot in Eden." Although Berry's poem is essentially a statement, it is not simply prose in lines but a thought that demands the conciseness of poetic expression. If Cleanth Brooks is right that poetry is the language of paradox, what better subject for poetry than the paradox of the fortunate fall?

The argument begins with a clever turn on the adjective *original*. One thing good about Original Sin is that it is manifestly not original in the vulgar and colloquial sense in which we use the term. In other words, it is not something that we were clever and daring enough to come up with on our own. In addition to humbling us, sin also alerts us to the fact that "something is bad the matter." That very realization, however, turns our gaze inward rather than outward, because "Innocence / would never recognize it." The poem then concludes with a straightforward assertion of the old theme of *felix culpa*:

> . . . We need it
> too, for without it we would not
> know
> forgiveness, goodness, gratitude,
> the fund of grace by which alone

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we live.

I suspect that the agrarian poet Wendell Berry puts together a book of poetry in much the same way that the biblical sower plants a field. Some seeds fall among the thistles, others by the side of the road. And even some that are planted end up inextricably bound with the chaff. But enough ripen to produce a harvest beyond our expectation or deserving.

Mark Royden Winchell's latest book, Reinventing the South: Versions of a Literary Region, *was published by the University of Missouri Press last January.*

The Point Left Unprotected

by Herbert Arthur Scott Trask

The Trouble With Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality
by Walter Benn Michaels
New York: Henry Holt; 256 pp., $23.00

◆

This book will surely be widely denounced. Its merit, which is considerable, is suggested by the vast coalition who will want to deride it: the corporate elite, Republicans, Clinton Democrats, neoliberals, the politically correct lobby, libertarians, neocons. Any author who can provoke such an array of enemies must be onto something.

Walter Benn Michaels' argument can be summarized as follows: A vast gulf of inequality is growing between the richest Americans and everyone else; it is a serious problem; no one is doing anything about it; and the reason for this inaction is the current American obsession with race and the politics of identity, which has substituted a faux egalitarianism for the one that really matters and a phony threat (racism) for the real one (economic inequality).

Both sides, liberal and conservative, play this game. "What the right wants are culture wars instead of class wars, because as long as the wars are about identity instead of money, it doesn't matter who wins." Corporate America has embraced the diversity agenda with enthusiasm and cash: "What CEO doesn't find it easier to respect his employee's culture than to pay them [*sic*] a decent wage?" Meanwhile, the left prefers fighting "racism" and other forms of "intolerance" instead of poverty, because it is easier and because so many leftists are beneficiaries of disparities in income.

The University of Illinois at Chicago, Michaels' employer, is proud of the diversity of its student body: The institution is ranked among the top ten in the country. Yet its classrooms are overcrowded, the "physical plant is deteriorating," and new appointments cannot be made. One result is that students may find themselves standing in class or sitting on the floor—but not to worry: Their ordeal is mitigated by the rainbow coalition represented in class. Professor Michaels thinks this preposterous.

Consider the ratio between the incomes of corporate executive officers and their employees. In 1982, it was 42 to 1; in 2004, it was 431 to 1. Or contrast Allison Schiefflin, who earns approximately $1.2 million per year selling bonds at Morgan Stanley, with the average female Wal-Mart employee, who earns less than $21,000 selling Chinese-made Tupperware. The latter would have to work 60 years to earn what Allison earns in a single year. Or, rather, what she used to make: Allison recently won a discrimination lawsuit against her company resulting in a $300,000 raise and $12 million in "damages." (Allison was earning less than her male counterparts, having been excluded from the male culture of bond-trading good times.) Female Wal-Mart employees also earn less than their male counterparts, but the gap is only $1,100 per year. Michaels argues that it is ludicrous to claim that the two women are victims of sexism. In his view, Allison is no victim at all, and, if Wal-Mart women are underpaid, so are the men.

What of the vaunted mobility of American life? Michaels argues that it is largely a myth. In 1996, 64 percent of Americans under the age of 30 thought it likely that they would become rich, which they defined as making at least $100,000 per year. Ten years later, the median *per capita* income remains much less than half of that, and the share of the population making the cut-off is only about seven percent. Michaels' conclusion is sardonic but just: "Young people in America have about as realistic an assessment of their economic situation as, say, the contestants on *American Idol* have of their singing ability." The single best predictor of one's net worth is neither race nor intelligence, but the net worth of one's parents.

Michaels argues persuasively that a primary function of our educational system is to "convince rich people that they deserve their wealth"—in other words, to disguise the reality of plutocracy with the fantasy of meritocracy. Most people are aware of the very considerable economic advantages conferred by graduating from an elite university; hence, the importance of persuading everyone that those who get in do so on the basis of merit alone. Affirmative action accomplishes this by suggesting that the chief obstacle, which used to be racial discrimination, is now intelligence, allowing whites who attend these institutions to congratulate themselves on their worth and achievement. "The fact (and it is a fact) that it doesn't help to be white to get into Harvard replaces the much more fundamental fact that it does help to be rich and that it's virtually essential not to be poor."

Michaels asks important questions that no one else is asking. As racism continues to recede into the past, why does antiracism become ever stronger? Antiracism involves not only a strict policing of speech and behavior but a continued mobilization of citizens against a perceived threat. But why fight something that no longer threatens?

And, perhaps, never threatened at all. Michaels wants to know why there is a government-funded Holocaust Memorial Museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C., in a country in which the event itself never took place, and why Philip Roth's counterfactual history, *The Plot Against America*, which imagines an antisemitic reign of terror unleashed by President Lindbergh, was received so enthusiastically by critics. Why invent a racist crime that never happened?

Walter Michaels sees a country suffering from a collective form of schizophrenia. Science has supposedly demonstrated that race doesn't exist, yet the government continues to classify citizens according to their race, and universities continue to practice affirmative action. Americans pretend to be color blind, yet they are obsessed with race and determined to keep it at the center of their national experience. Why?

He thinks the answer is that the race issue serves the interest of the powerful. But it never occurs to Michaels that, had the Immigration Act of 1965 not been enacted, there would be much less diversity to

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celebrate, just a European-American majority and an African-American minority—a situation as old as the republic itself. The politics of multiculturalism is impossible to imagine without the mass immigration that both created and sustains it. Is it mere accident that the surge of inequality since the 1980's has coincided with the tidal wave of Third World immigrants to this country? Or that the same thing happened in the late 19th century?

Tom Ashbrook's *On Point* (an NPR program) recently broadcast a four-part series about inequality, on which one of his guests was Robert Rubin, the former treasury secretary under Clinton. Rubin's opinions would not have surprised Murray Rothbard, who was well aware of how successful elites seek to control and neutralize the reform process. Rubin was not sure what we should do about the income divide (his answers were vague and evasive), but he was sure about what we should *not* do—interfere with "free trade" or curb immigration. He brought this up five times in one hour.

Readers of *Chronicles* will have some serious disagreements with the author, but that should not prevent our recognizing an important and valuable work. "Inequality," Montesquieu warned, "will enter at the point not protected by the laws, and the republic will be lost."

Herbert Arthur Scott Trask is the author of "Condy Raguet and the Northern Laissez-Faire, State-Rights Tradition," soon to be submitted for publication, and is at work on his Civil War book, "Copperheads and Conservatives: The Northern Antiwar Movement, 1861-65."

All Honorable Means

by Clark Stooksbury

Beating the Powers That Be
by Sean Scallon
Baltimore: Publish America;
203 pp., $19.95

◆

The political culture of the United States is cramped and stunted by the narrow range of acceptable viewpoints and the utterly banal, subliterate tone of our political campaigns—to compare American elections to the marketing of soap is an insult to the people who sell soap. If, as Sean Scallon notes in *Beating the Powers That Be*, culture precedes politics, the state of American politics says nothing good about the state of American culture.

Beating the Powers That Be is, in part, a story of the constriction of the American political spectrum since World War II. Scallon describes three related political movements that began in the Upper Midwest in the first half of the 20th century: the Progressive Party in Wisconsin, the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota, and the Non-Partisan League in North Dakota. These organizations were representative of the far left in this country at a time when the left cared more for working people than about securing the civil rights of the transgendered.

Scallon begins his narrative with a remembrance of the late Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, the latest in a line of "Minnesota Mavericks" that include U.S. Rep. Charles Lindbergh, Sr., and Sen. Eugene McCarthy. Wellstone was a professor who wanted to make a difference. "He wanted to link academics with social activism the way professors did back during the Great Depression and the New Deal years of the 1930s . . ." Wellstone entered politics and served two full terms in the U.S. Senate before his untimely death in a plane crash in October 2002, only days after courageously voting against the then wildly popular Iraq-war resolution.

The tradition that Wellstone represented began in 1918, when the Farmer-Labor Party was founded. (It later merged with Minnesota's Democratic Party.) Unlike the fringe third parties we are used to today, Farmer-Labor was once powerful in Minnesota, winning elections for governor and senator. Scallon describes the factors that lay behind the alliance between farmers and laborers:

> A farmer owns his land and pays taxes on it, no matter how small the plot. Holding onto that land and making a profit from it to provide for [his family] and pass [it] on to [them] is his primary concern. . . . He can be radical if ownership of his land is at stake and be quite conservative in order to use that land as he . . . sees fit. . . . Before World War II a laborer didn't own much more than his or her labor power. A laborer can be conservative if that labor is perceived at stake . . . Or he . . . may turn radical if working conditions are so tough [that he feels he has] nothing left to lose.

Owing to the efforts of Floyd B. Olson and the suffering of the Great Depression, the Farmer-Labor Party dominated Minnesota in the 1930's, but it couldn't long survive the death in 1936 of then-governor Olson. Although the party still carries the name Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, Scallon pronounces it dead as of November 5, 2002.

> The election results declare that Minnesota has officially become suburbia just like everywhere else—and the Democrats will adjust accordingly. There are far more soccer moms and office-park dads in the land of 10,000 lakes than there are farmers, factory workers and the Scandinavian socialists who once formed the DFL's backbone.

To Minnesota's east lies Wisconsin, a state whose political culture is described by Scallon as "clean, high-minded and infused with a civic tradition and ethos." Here, Robert La Follette, Sr., disgusted with corruption in the state Republican Party, became a progressive reformer, advocating regulation of banks, railroads, and insurance companies. A very successful politician, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives before serving as governor and senator from Wis-

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consin. In 1912, his first presidential campaign was done in by another progressive Republican—Teddy Roosevelt:

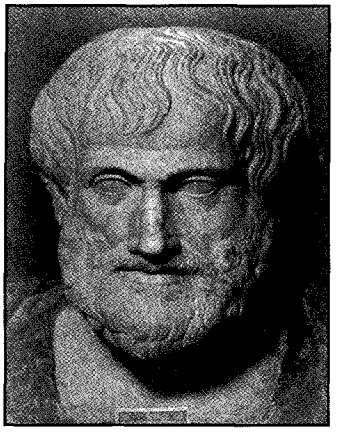
> [W]hat both men thought progressivism was began to diverge by 1912. To LaFollette, it was a movement of political reform and social justice. Inequities in the great transition from farm to factory and the corruption it spawned would be straightened out . . . [M]ore so than just being from the East, Roosevelt's views resonated with those who weren't just interested in anti-trust legislation or removing some hack politician from a county commission for corruption. [His progressivism] was about changing the nature of man itself so [he] would no longer accept bribes or be so greedy. It led to beliefs that man could be made perfect or progress from his primal urges and lusts.

As David Frum says, "War is a great clarifier." La Follette distinguished himself from Roosevelt by opposing America's entry into World War I, for which he was called a traitor by the *New York Times*. Robert La Follette, Jr., succeeded his father in the Senate—both as a Republican and, later, as a representative of the Progressive Party—and opposed Franklin Roosevelt's committing the country to World War II.

After the New Deal and World War II, there was little room in America for the kind of movement that Scallon describes. As the federal government grew, taking over many of the functions of the states, Cold War conformity narrowed the scope of acceptable opinion. On occasion, broad discontent with the *status quo* bubbled up in the form of presidential campaigns by such candidates as George Wallace and Ross Perot, but Scallon notes a more interesting phenomenon occurring in political movements at lower levels of government. He focuses on three such movements—two in the New England states of Vermont and New Hampshire and a regional movement in the South, where the League of the South seeks to promote the "independence of the South 'by all honorable means.'" I remain somewhat skeptical of the prospects for success of this last enterprise. Nothing about the quality of political leaders that the South has produced in the last few years, including our sitting president and his immediate predecessor, inspires my confidence (as a Tennessean) in a Southern regime. Decentralization of our monstrously overgrown federal government, however, remains an excellent idea, while dissolution of the Union should be a legitimate topic of discussion, not a hate crime.

Accordingly, Scallon profiles the Second Vermont Republic, an organization dedicated to keeping the Green Mountain State from becoming a giant Wal-Mart-McDonald's-big-box strip mall and reestablishing it as the independent republic it was from 1777 to 1791. And, next door, the Free State Project is working to encourage at least 20,000 libertarian ideologues to move to New Hampshire for the purpose of taking over the state's political system. While the thought of an invasion by libertarians may be frightening, the free marketeers are, in fact, relatively harmless. If the Free State Project succeeds in making any change more substantive than requiring Granite State high-schoolers to suffer through *Atlas Shrugged*—including all 60 pages of John Galt's speech—I'll be surprised.

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.



The Greek Conservative Mind

The Greeks invented political philosophy . . . but not out of thin air

The ancient Greeks liberated themselves from the shackles of religion and tradition to pursue a dream of democracy, equality, and human rights. Right?

Wrong. We do well to remember the Greeks as they really were: their aristocratic pursuit of virtue, their general disdain for democracy, and their strong attachments to family and religion.

"The Greek Conservative Mind" is taught by Dr. Thomas Fleming, who is regarded as a leading authority on Greek lyric verse. Originally presented in the fall of 2004 as a lecture series at the Institute, the course now comprises 16 recorded lectures (on CD or audiotape) and a study guide with suggested readings, key terms, and discussion questions.

For more information, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811 or e-mail *jkooistra@rockfordinstitute.org*.

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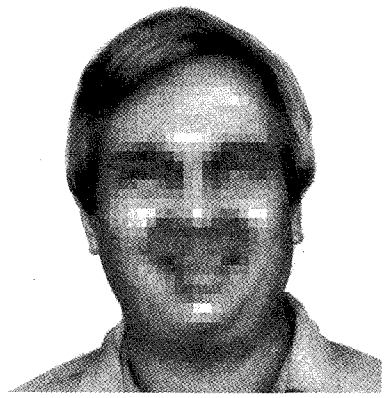
by Joe Ecclesia

A Plea for Clarity



Your Excellency:

I trust you are in robust spirits as you face the rigors of the Christmas season. Surely, nowhere is there greater evidence that sin is a good wrongly twisted than in the manner in which we Americans celebrate Christmas. Contrary to our Church's teaching, which emphasizes the penitential and preparatory aspects of Advent, many Catholics (like other Americans) spend December shopping like mall rats, eating and drinking like sybarites, and dashing from party to party like girls during a sorority rush. Is it any wonder so many celebrants are delighted to see the backside of Christmas? On the Feast of Stephen, brigades of holiday-weary women hurl denuded conifers curbside for pickup, while strong, otherwise stoic men weep at kitchen tables over smoldering credit cards. Christmastide, that garland of feast days leading to Epiphany when our hearts should be riotous with celebration, finds many of us staggering and wan, debilitated as bachelor uncles after a month-long bender.

Here, Your Excellency, you deserve our thanks. Every Advent, you and your fellow priests remind us to make Christmas more than a bacchanal of department stores and gluttony.

Speaking of reminders: One of our parish priests gave yet another homily on the Catholic obligation to applaud the ongoing invasion of the United States. About once a month, Father beats us about the head with facts and fantasies regarding immigration. (He never uses the word *illegal*.) Last Sunday, he presented the standard arguments for open borders: We are a nation of immigrants; our economy would collapse without immigrants; immigrants do jobs Americans won't do. He ended with the theological right bower, reminding us that the poor will enter Heaven more easily than the rich. (A question, Your Excellency: If being poor is a virtue, why are we trying to eliminate poverty? I often give my pocket change to street beggars; am I keeping souls from Heaven?) Father also pointed us toward a recent statement from the Most Reverend William Skylstad, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in which you and your fellow bishops support Father's position.

Accustomed to Father's one-sided arguments and his attacks on the fascists and bigots in the pews—*i.e.*, white folks—I confess I paid scant attention to his homily. Only when he mentioned the Catholic ideal of a living wage did I perk up, attuned not to his remarks on immigration but to his abuse of language and reason. Didn't he realize that immigrants help to keep wages low?

Wondering whether Bishop Skylstad's missive was equally illogical, I found the statement on comprehensive immigration reform on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website (*usccb.org*). Praiseworthy for its brevity (it isn't quite 300 words) and general clarity (Churchese is minimized), this "statement" is nonetheless lacking in fairness and diction. Archbishop Skylstad writes that you bishops have heard from many people, including Catholics, who oppose the flood of illegal immigrants, but he never cites the reasons for their opposition. He writes that we must practice compassion toward immigrants but doesn't address the plight of thousands of workers here in Western North Carolina—and the millions nationwide—whose jobs went to Mexico or China. He advocates fairness but doesn't mention the financial distress of a Mexican-American in California whose construction company must compete with cheap illegal labor. He demands a better life for immigrants but doesn't hint at the burden placed on taxpayers by the increased cost of social services and schools.

This lack of fairness and charity are reflected in the document's offenses against the English language. The writers of this "statement"—only a committee could compose prose this awful—prefer the passive to the active voice, a voice favored by politicians (and, apparently, bishops) to escape responsibility for their actions. The writers haul out certain catch phrases (my favorite is "the human person," an expression favored by our late pontiff that now appears routinely in Church missives. Human person as opposed to what? Squirrel persons? Inhuman persons? The Three Persons of the Holy Trinity? What in the name of Strunk & White do you mean?) In an ugly use of the adverb, the writers tell us our immigration policy needs "to be reformed urgently," though they don't explain why you bishops have waited 40 years to demand urgent reform. Is it because most Americans now oppose illegal immigration? The writers state that "the status quo is morally unacceptable" without telling us what the "status quo" is. Finally, the authors write with a smug, sanctimonious tone inimical to Christian debate.

After glancing at some other dreadfully composed USCCB documents, let me make a suggestion, Your Excellency. Go online and search for George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language." Distribute copies of this essay to your staff. Mail them to your fellow bishops. Many will be sympathetic, at least before they read the essay, for, like them, Orwell was a lefty. The difference between him and many lefty Church bureaucrats is that Orwell had the guts to call a lie a lie when he heard one. After citing examples of dishonest writing in what he called "a catalogue of swindles and perversions," Orwell discusses at length why "political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging, and sheer cloudy vagueness."

Much the same can be said of ecclesiastical language. From the loophole-riddled documents of Vatican II to the bloated, ineffectual statements of the USCCB, the Church has often sown discord and confusion in the place of Truth. Given this failing, I might also recommend the USCCB hire someone trained in grammar and logic to vet its written pronouncements. Perhaps then more people might begin listening to you again.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent,

Joe Ecclesia

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by Scott P. Richert

Life in a Border Town

The archetypical middle-sized town in the middle of the Middle West, Rockford seems about as far removed from the border as you can get, unless we count the border with Wisconsin, a few miles to the north. And yet, Rockford has been subject to successive waves of immigration that have brought with them (if in muted form) the cultural and political tensions typical of an actual border town. From Yankees to Scots and Irish to Swedes to Italians and Sicilians (there is a difference), with multiple waves of Germans washing over them all (and forming, even today, the largest ethnic group in Rockford), to Poles and Lithuanians and, more recently, Asians (especially Vietnamese and Laotians) and various ethnic groups from the former Yugoslavia, immigrants to Rockford have never fully coalesced into a common identity, giving the lie to the myth of the melting pot.

Shortly after the turn of the 20th century, Midwestern Yankeedom ceased to provide a common culture that all could participate in, if not exactly share. Throughout the Midwest, the preponderance of Deutschlanders naturally meant that an anglicized version of German culture slowly took its place, but the anti-German hysteria of World War I put serious kinks in that development, and World War II drove the final nails in the coffin (though remnants survive in such places as Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and St. Louis). Today, Rockford is described as either a Swedish or an Italian (meaning Sicilian) town, and those two ethnic groups dominated Rockford politics throughout most of the 20th century and continue to do so today. (Despite his name, our current mayor, Larry Morrissey, is half Sicilian.)

And now, the latest wave of immigration is transforming Rockford once again. As late as the 1990 Census, Hispanics (meaning Mexicans) made up less than three percent of Rockford's population. Today, they have topped ten percent and are poised to overtake blacks in the not-too-distant future. Ss. Peter and Paul, formerly a Lithuanian Catholic church, is now commonly referred to as Ss. Pedro y Paulo, and the pastor has been an outspoken supporter of the recent marches in favor of illegal immigrants. Having first colonized the neighborhood along South Main Street (originally Yankee, then Italian, and primarily black by the late 1960's), Mexican immigrants are now establishing restaurants, stores, and auto shops throughout the city. The Rockford Public School District has an extensive bilingual program (thanks, in part, to our 12-year-long school-discrimination lawsuit), and many businesses (especially banks and restaurants) and (of course) government offices have signs in English and Spanish—an increasing number with Spanish placed first.

When a town lacks a dominant culture (as Rockford does), such changes can cause unease among its citizens (as they have). Combine the sheer number of newcomers with rising crime rates and recent statistics showing that one fifth of Rockford's population falls below the poverty line, and Rockfordians have good reason to regard this wave of immigration as somewhat different from previous ones.

Besides ethnicity, however, there's another factor that's often overlooked when discussing current immigration, and it, too, makes Rockford—and most other towns throughout the Midwest—a sort of border town. This border is also cultural, but it cuts across ethnic groups. In fact, in some ways, more recent immigrants, to the extent that they remain ghettoized through language, religion, and cultural practice, tend to fall on what I regard as the right side of the border, while those who have "made it"—of any ethnicity—are more likely to cross over. In this sense, some recent Mexican immigrants share more with the Poles of Tony Bukoski's Superior, Wisconsin, than they do with their countrymen who came here 20 years ago. And I'm not talking about the religious affiliation that Catholic defenders of legal (and even illegal) immigration place far too much stock in.

This particular cultural border runs between those who still want to live as most civilized (and here, I'm using a fairly broad definition of *civilization*) men have lived down through the ages—a settled life, in stable communities, among people like themselves, close by their parents and the graves of their ancestors—and those postmodern nomads who believe that happiness lies not in memory but in amnesia—cultural, familial, even personal. "Know thyself!" means nothing when your self is really no different from your neighbor's, just as your vinyl-sided ranch that you intend to "own" only long enough so that you don't lose money when you sell it is, at most, just a mirror image of his house (not home). McDonald's and Wal-Mart and Microsoft and Hollywood don't have a monopoly grip on Americans in spite of their preferences; they have become monopolies or near-monopolies because too many people prefer the mediocrity of convenience to the inconveniences of real life.

To the extent that new immigrants really do come here out of economic necessity, and not out of a desire to forget their own past, they may fall on the right side of this cultural divide. Unfortunately, the very fact of their mobility makes it harder for them to remain there. Shorn of their connections to the place and community of their birth, they may find the glitter of fresh plastic all too appealing.

None of this is offered as a defense of current levels of immigration or of the ethnic mix of immigrants today—far from it. I'm in favor of a complete moratorium on immigration—not until the current crop of immigrants has "assimilated" but until we've all had an opportunity to put down sufficient roots in our own particular ways—until we've built our own churches and our own restaurants and our own grocery stores and our own neighborhoods and become Americans without losing what was best in our particular pasts (and, one hopes, while abandoning what was worst). Then, and only then, could far more moderate levels of immigrants than we currently see be welcomed into such communities, to which they might truly assimilate in a way that no immigrant could possibly assimilate to our "nation" or "culture" today. ◁

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Letter From Rome

by Andrea Kirk Assaf

Lebanon, Israel, and the Holy See

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Among the representatives of 15 powerful nations gathered in Rome on July 26 to discuss the crisis between Lebanon and Israel were clergymen sent from that tiniest of states ruled by the world's last absolute monarch, the Pope. Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo, Vatican secretary for relations with states, and two monsignors from his staff had been asked to be observers at the talks, which were initiated by the U.S. State Department and the Italian government. Though the clerics were not invited to address the community of politicians, their very presence reminded those gathered of the position of the Holy See on the conflict, one often repeated by Pope Benedict XVI: Besides calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the Pope made it clear that

> The Lebanese people have a right to the integrity and sovereignty of their country; the Israeli people have a right to live in peace in their own state, and the Palestinian people have a right to have a free and sovereign homeland.

The Pope's position echoed that of the pontiffs of the last century, who, following the establishment of Israel in 1948, argued that the only solution to protecting the Holy Land from interminable war is to grant Jerusalem special international status and to establish a contiguous Palestinian state. In effect, the Vatican endorsed the U.N. partition plan of 1947, which was never fully implemented because of the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Over the subsequent decades, the modern state of Israel would take on profound symbolism for Jews around the world, a development formally recognized by the Holy See in the jubilee year of 2000 with the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

This summer's devastating 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah was the first new war of Pope Benedict's pontificate, and his statements made during the crisis were consistent with the long-standing position of the Holy See on the conflicts in the Middle East. Initially, Benedict seemed reluctant for the Vatican to voice a strong opinion, since addressing issues pertaining to the region is always delicate for the Church, as She tries to promote better interreligious relations with both Jews and Muslims while, at the same time, serving as the international advocate of marginalized Christians in the Holy Land. In response to his first questioning by the media on the conflict, the Pope replied that he was in full agreement with the communiqué of the G-8, desiring only to remind everyone of the importance of prayer in the achievement of peace. The following Sunday, he added his judgment that

> at the origin of these cruel oppositions there are, sadly, objective situations of violation of law and justice. But neither terrorist acts nor reprisals, above all when there are tragic consequences for the civilian population, can be justified. By such paths, as bitter experience demonstrates, one does not arrive at positive results.

As the less-guarded Cardinal Ratzinger, Benedict sometimes used more direct language, as when he called the prospect of a preemptive war against Iraq "illegal" and clarified, in October 2002, that the very concept of preemptive or preventive war appeared nowhere in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. A few months later, at the invitation of the U.S. embassy to the Holy See, American Catholic theologian Michael Novak spoke in Rome on the topic of "Asymmetrical Warfare and Just War," offering a contrasting interpretation to Vatican officials.

Despite his newfound diplomatic approach, Pope Benedict did not shy away from consistently raising the alarm concerning the escalation of violence in Lebanon and Israel in July and August, specifically calling for an immediate cease-fire, humanitarian aid for the hundreds of thousands of civilians caught in the crossfire, and the establishment of a serious dialogue between all the affected parties that respects the sovereignty and rights of all. He also sent an envoy to Lebanon near the end of the war, Roger Cardinal Etchegaray, the same envoy sent by John Paul II to Saddam Hussein in a last-minute attempt to avert war. The mission was one of spiritual solidarity: At the same time that Cardinal Etchegaray presided over a Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon (concelebrated by Maronite Patriarch of Antioch Nasrallah Sfeir), a Mass was celebrated in Israel at the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth by Monsignor Antonio Franco, the Vatican nuncio to Israel, and Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah. Less than a month before, Hezbollah rockets had fallen a short distance from this church, killing two Arab Israeli boys.

Pope Benedict also gave his approval to the intervention of a representative of the Holy See at a special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council dedicated to the situation in Lebanon. "The violence of these weeks is destroying a promising model of national conviviality," said Archbishop Silvano Tomasi,

> built over centuries, where a plurality of communities, even of very different religious convictions, learned that the only way to live in peace and security and to use their human resources and diversity in a creative way, is dialogue and close cooperation.

Countering the maxim that "might makes right," the Holy See's permanent observer to the U.N. office in Geneva enjoined:

> May law never reach the point of sanctioning results obtained by force alone. That would be the ruin of civilization, the defeat of international law, and a fatal example for other areas in the region and, in fact, for the world.

In some candid remarks to German-speaking media a few days before the U.N. cease-fire deal of August 11, Benedict said of the Holy See's position,

> Of course we have no political influence and we don't want any political power, but we do want

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Elizabeth Wolf

> to appeal to all Christians and to all those who feel touched by the words of the Holy See, to help mobilize all the forces that recognize how war is the worst solution for all sides. It brings no good to anyone, not even to the apparent victors. We understand this very well in Europe, after the two World Wars.

It is an opinion echoed by an injured Israeli soldier speaking, in August, to a reporter from his hospital bed: "I'm not sure what we were fighting for but I'm 100 percent sure that we didn't achieve it." After more than a month of fighting and thousands of lives lost or permanently altered by injury, the truce indeed proved that no good had been achieved: Israel was forced to agree to a prisoner exchange for her two abducted soldiers after swearing to continue the fight until they were rescued; Hezbollah remains in Lebanon and is more popular than ever; and the new Lebanese government—the first anti-Syrian government since the end of the civil war—finds itself under the threat of another civil war provoked by the destruction of social and economic bonds that had been painstakingly built up over the last 15 years. And yet another wave of emigration of educated and wealthy Christians and Sunni Muslims from Lebanon has upset the fragile balance of religions and cultures in that country.

Pope Benedict touched on the role Christians can play as peacemakers in the Middle East in his August interview:

> Everyone needs peace. There is a strong Christian community in Lebanon, there are Christians among the Arabs, there are Christians in Israel. Christians throughout the world are committed to helping these countries that are dear to all of us. There are moral forces at work that are ready to help people understand how the only solution is for all of us to live together. These are the forces we want to mobilize: It's up to politicians to find a way to let this happen as soon as possible and, especially, to make it last.

The Christians of the Middle East captured a rare moment of the popular media's attention during the civilian slaughter in Lebanon and Israel during the 34-day war. Just after the fighting began, the leader of the largest group of Christians in the Middle East, Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, met with Vice President Dick Cheney in the White House. Sfeir happened to be in Washington for the dedication of a new Maronite church bearing the timely name Our Lady of Lebanon. The patriarch's remarks to the media following the meeting were mystifying, considering the Vice President's strong support of the administration's policy on the war: "[Cheney] will see what he can do for us. It's not so easy because of a lot of complicated situations with a lot of countries." Cardinal Sfeir indicated that he believed Cheney did not share the U.S. government's plan, presumably referring to Condoleezza Rice's call for a "new Middle East." Cardinal Sfeir added that Cheney did not communicate his own plan for the Middle East in their meeting, if he had one. The patriarch's words reveal the confusion felt by pro-Western political and religious leaders in Lebanon following the U.S. government's overwhelming show of support for Israel during that country's systematic destruction of the infrastructure, economy, and population of Lebanon. After a year of optimistic dialogue with the Bush administration following the 2005 withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, the young government in Beirut received only condolences and promises of humanitarian aid from Washington, which chose to let Israel "finish the job" in Lebanon.

The patriarch's previous visit to the White House had been at the invitation of the President, for consultation during the "Cedar Revolution," which followed the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri, allegedly by Syrian agents. The meeting was symbolic of both the Bush administration's recognition of the role of the Maronite church in Lebanese politics and the administration's interest in supporting a pro-Western Christian presence in the Middle East.

While the United States may have lost favor with the Lebanese for delaying in calling for a cease-fire and for selling missiles to Israel at the height of the bloodshed this summer, historically, the Christians of Lebanon have long held both political and religious alliances with Western countries—France, in particular, as well as the Vatican. The strongest denomination in both numbers and political influence is the Maronites, who are proud of the fact that they have remained in communion with the Church of Rome despite hundreds of years of isolation and persecution by Muslims as well as the Byzantine Empire.

During the 15-year civil war, certain factions of the Maronites had done their share of persecuting other religious and political sects, and the Vatican has had to tread carefully in the complicated politics of the Middle Eastern churches. Aware of the temptation that Christians in the Middle East face to tribalize and politicize their religion as other sects have done, Pope John Paul II made a powerful intervention in the aftermath of the war. Following the Taif Accords in 1990, the Vatican convened a synod devoted to Lebanon; instead of burying the country's shame along with her war dead, the synod encouraged an individual and collective examination of conscience and reconciliation between the warring religious sects. It was the first Catholic synod at which Muslims attended as participants, and it culminated in a lengthy Apostolic exhortation entitled "A New Hope for Lebanon," signed by John Paul II in 1997 at the historic Our Lady of Lebanon shrine overlooking Beirut, at a Mass attended by 500,000 people, mostly young Christian and Muslim Lebanese.

John Paul had charged those youths to be "the recipients of the message of renewal your church and your country need." Less than ten years later, the Vatican has reason again to pray for a renewal of Lebanon and to mourn the Holy Land's loss of its most promising peacemakers. The "moral forces" Pope Benedict seeks to mobilize are fighting a seemingly impossible battle in a land known more for hate than holiness.

Andrea Kirk Assaf writes from Rome, where she is at work on a book on the Bush administration's relationship to the Vatican.

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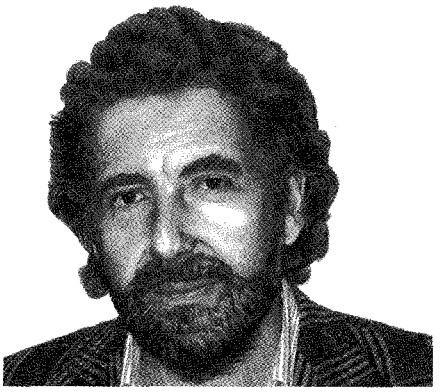
by Andrei Navrozov

Of Love's Compromises



Death is terribly tactful. It comes to a man when he finally realizes that he understands nothing, thus saving his face. Watched back to front, like the videocassette that you know is on fast rewind when you see the hooker paying the client, life is a gradual shedding of obsolescent platitudes, a quiet letting go of truths discredited by events, a delicate parting of the ways with what were once one's guiding preconceptions. Among these is one's view of compromise generally and of the compromises that mark the relationship between the sexes in particular.

As in the symbiosis of work and play, the arterial system through which our certainties course, and where our vacillations are oxygenated, is volition—that is, a person's inner conviction that the choice he is making is untrammeled by anything anterior to his will. A man may be happy to jump on the trampoline all day long provided nobody's holding a gun to his head, because otherwise we think he has every right to regard this bit of harmless fun as a form of torture under the Geneva Conventions.

The diabolical twist to the compromise of love is that it suits a commercial civilization to equate wealth with liberty. Of all such self-serving definitions—to the effect that the acquisition of wealth is success, that success thus adjudged is virtue, that virtue accrued on account of success is wisdom, and so on—it is by far the most dastardly or pernicious, in that its psychological action is based on the species of deception zoologists term aggressive mimicry, whereby the predator adopts the physical characteristics of the prey. As this piece of sophistry has the vast ovum of an evolved and complex—I nearly said *rich*—culture, as reassuringly Western in its modes as it is comfortably Christian in its manners, behind it with all its immense weight, it obviously takes a rare and brave nonconformist, a stubborn transvaluer of values, a walker on the razor's edge, to dare gainsay it without slipping on one of its elliptical etceteras. In healthier, intellectually more average and socially better adapted minds, the deception works like the door of a prison cell, with a picture of a bathing beauty and a sign such as BROTHEL winking above it in colored lights, into which the trusting victim rushes of his own accord. Put another way, the gull takes the Devil's shilling for the sake of the very caprices—a silk foulard, a glorious night out, a girl's sincere affection—which his having enlisted as a lifelong conscript enjoins him from ever indulging.

Ah, what a cheap, dirty, no-good swindle that is, but how well it works. In my second year of university, I dreamed of meeting a girl called Mary. *Hi, I'm Mary.* No, I could not dream of meeting her, because she was a blonde and a goddess and I was a nobody, and what I actually dreamed about was a less ordered universe, one in which a nobody could imagine whatever he liked without being weighed down by the sheer absurdity of it, at least not straightaway. I remember telling a friend over lunch in college, as Mary was sweeping by with a glass of milk on an empty tray, listen, why are life's injustices so convoluted? Why must I give up all hope of seeing the girl's lips move in the utterance of her name for the apparently irrelevant reason that here and now, with her hair up, she looks like Venus in Botticelli's famous allegory of spring?

Not 48 hours later I was in bed with her. *In bed with Mary.* Had I been at Syracuse by Archimedes' side when the foot of the Roman soldier came down on those drawings of his in the sand, had I seen the great library of Alexandria go up in flames or heard Trotsky call for the churches of Holy Russia to be razed to the ground, I could not have conceived of an act of sacrilege more senseless, but the fact was that we had met, and she became my college sweetheart. It took me less than 48 hours to convince myself that all's as it should be; that somehow I've managed to split the difference between a nobody and a goddess; that, if the girl wants me, there must be a reason for it; and so, instead of making a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the nearest shrine of Venus, upon bare knees and up a mountain path strewn with broken rock, I started living with Mary as though living with Mary was a human right under the aforesaid Conventions.

Mary and I. Once this absurdity had worked itself loose and got taken for granted, others began to jostle for acceptance in my mind. Why shouldn't I spend my days reading the Oxford English Dictionary? Why shouldn't I absent myself, if only to take long walks, to write poems, to look in shop windows? And why should I write poems only about her? Ah, that pair of incubi, *why should I* and *why shouldn't I*, dialectical claws of Satan, furtive shadows in the moonlit walk of God's every garden!

And why, now that she was mine in body and soul I was asking myself, why should I entwine my destiny with hers so completely and irrevocably? *Poor Mary.* Because she *was* poor, and so was I. A life with her, given the familiar inevitability of children and a job to support them, meant the death of everything but her within me, though eventually, as I reasoned in what can only be described as a reasoning fit, it would also mean my death within her, because a frustrated, embittered, failed writer is of no use to anybody, least of all to the woman for whose sake he has never tried his luck. Now, if one of us had had money, it would have been all different, wouldn't it, because wealth is liberty. Money buys nannies and the time to think, it entertains the wife and placates the husband, it clears the air and perfumes the water . . . Elliptical etcetera. And so, at some point before leaving university, having reasoned that he travels the fastest who travels alone, I liberated myself from Mary by sleeping with her best friend.

It isn't a very original story, but, as lawyers say, it goes to motivation.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

To Lose a War

President George W. Bush's highly anticipated prime-time speech to mark the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on America was supposed to be nonpartisan and conciliatory. It offered him an opportunity to present mature thoughts on one of the most momentous events in this country's history, to correct several manifest flaws in his conceptual approach to the "War on Terror," and to chart a coherent strategy without which it cannot be conducted successfully.

Instead, he presented a host of clichés, platitudes, and assertions as ideological as his first State of the Union Address in 2002 and as misguided as his most recent one last February.

"Since the horror of 9/11, we have learned a great deal about the enemy," the President said in the opening paragraph. "We have learned that they form a global network of extremists who are driven by a perverted vision of Islam—a totalitarian ideology that hates freedom, rejects tolerance and despises all dissent."

The notion of "a perverted vision of Islam," as I have argued repeatedly in these pages, is a fundamental error, the mother of all others in Mr. Bush's understanding of September 11 and its implications. The enemy is not merely "a global network of extremists" but an inherently aggressive, demographically vibrant, and ideologically rigid movement that is based on an eminently orthodox interpretation of Islamic scripture and uninterrupted historical practice. It is a movement of global proportions and world-historical significance.

The movement has different guises—practical political or millenarian, Sunni Wahabist or Shiite Mahdist—and often mutually antagonistic protagonists: Saudi royal kleptocrats and their sworn Al Qaeda enemies; Iranian "Twelver" imamists and their Hezbollah clients; Pakistani generals and Afghan guerrillas; Bosnian veterans and Hamas bombers; Chechen child killers and suavely articulate Muslim spokesmen in the West. Together, they contribute to the contemporary upsurge of Islam as an ideology and as a blueprint for political action, a multifaceted and decentralized phenomenon that cannot be compared in dynamism, energy, and potential consequences with any other creed or ideology in today's world. It demands a bold and sustained Western response that has failed to materialize so far, largely because of our own leaders' continuing insistence on the false dichotomy between the core teaching of Islam and its allegedly "perverted vision."

Mr. Bush was right to say that "the war is not over, and it will not be over until either we or the extremists emerge victorious," but his definition of victory is based on wishful thinking. His assertion that "we are fighting for the possibility that good and decent people across the Middle East can raise up societies based on freedom, and tolerance, and personal dignity" assumes that, deep inside, some 500 million of the region's Muslim denizens long to live under a Western-style liberal regime and that they would reject their own "totalitarian ideology that hates freedom, rejects tolerance and despises all dissent" if given a chance.

This same assertion, made by the President on many previous occasions, is not only false but illogical. Mr. Bush's insistence on effecting the democratic transformation of the Middle East is unattainable in the form he imagines it—and, in the form it is likely to take, it will be inimical to the American interest.

In practical terms, our Middle East policies, together with the continuing presence of American forces in Iraq, make the United States the object of hatred throughout the region, more so than at any other time in history. The result is an insoluble paradox: Whatever America wishes to accomplish there, local Muslims will want more of the opposite. Whatever political force and its candidate the United States endorses or supports, the "street" will reject him in favor of his more radical opponent—as Mahmoud Abbas discovered at the Palestinian Authority general election earlier this year.

In principle, even if exporting democracy could be developed into a workable scenario, the end result would be detrimental to U.S. security. Instead of a degenerate House of Saud, Bin Laden and his followers would come to power in Riyadh. Iraq would be ruled by Shiite visionaries even more radical than those who are already in power. Mubaraq would be killed, and the Muslim Brotherhood would turn Egypt into an Islamic Republic. In Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Kuwait, and the Emirates, the survival of nominally pro-Western regimes would be undermined. Mr. Bush's push for the Middle East to embrace democracy would benefit those who would never thank him for making their rise to power possible.

The President apparently is unaware that exporting institutions is not possible outside of the framework of ideas and culture that sustains them. Those ideas, in the case of the West, are rooted in the Hellenic city-state, the Gospel, and the heresy of the Enlightenment; the notion of liberty, of individual responsibility resulting from the existence of individual free will, of collective creativity embodied in the rendering of Bach's cantatas and the launching of space shuttles. Those core ideas are anathema to Islam. Traditionally Christian societies have been able to develop democratic institutions, while traditionally Muslim ones have not, because Christians have a different concept of governmental authority—one that accepts the legitimacy of two realms, Caesar's and the Church's. In Islam, any attempt at making such a distinction is an act of rebellion against Allah's supremacy, an act of disbelief punishable by death. It is noteworthy that the term *democracy* did not have an equivalent in any Muslim language until a few decades ago. Its fundamental principle, equality, remains absent from the Muslim vocabulary.

Five years into his "War on Terror," Mr. Bush refuses to abandon his pseudo-reality. "With our help, the people of the Middle East are now stepping forward to claim their freedom," he declared.

From Kabul to Baghdad to Beirut,

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> there are brave men and women risking their lives each day for the same freedoms that we enjoy. And they have one question for us: Do we have the confidence to do in the Middle East what our fathers and grandfathers accomplished in Europe and Asia? By standing with democratic leaders and reformers, by giving voice to the hopes of decent men and women, we are offering a path away from radicalism. And we are enlisting the most powerful force for peace and moderation in the Middle East: the desire of millions to be free.

In its spirit, form, and truthfulness, this quotation is worthy of the standard Soviet claim, repeated *ad nauseam* until the collapse of the Berlin Wall, that the "socialist community of nations" was based on a willing partnership of working men and women who strive to build a classless society and defend it against assorted imperialist predators abroad and reactionary traitors at home. Unfortunately for Mr. Bush, the nearest definition of *freedom* that most of those Middle Eastern millions desire would entail the absence of American soldiers and non-Islamic institutions from their lives—just as millions of Poles, Czechs, and others desired nothing more earnestly before 1989 than to be rid of Soviet soldiers and communist institutions.

An infuriating part of Mr. Bush's address came when he declared that

> [W]e look to the day when moms and dads throughout the Middle East see a future of hope and opportunity for their children, and when that good day comes the clouds of war will part, the appeal of radicalism will decline, and we will leave our children with a better and safer world.

Such kitschy utopianism is not only devoid of taste but dangerous. Feeling warm and fuzzy about alien "moms and dads" who overwhelmingly detest us translates directly into our suicidal immigration policies, which granted 100,000 green cards to Muslims in 2005 alone.

Mr. Bush's speech touched on Afghanistan only *en passant*, as an illustration of the successful offensive strategy he adopted after September 11; but his bland claim that "we helped drive the Taliban from power" rings increasingly hollow at a time when Kabul is the only place in that country in which the U.S.-sponsored president Karzai can hope to survive from one day to the next and the Taliban-inspired resistance is more active today than at any time in the past five years.

The discrepancy brings to mind Mr. Bush's enthusiastic greeting of parliamentary elections in Afghanistan a year ago as "a major step forward" for the country's democratic process. What he has not mentioned in any of his public utterances since is that the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) is now completely dominated by warlords, opium magnates, veteran jihadists, and former Taliban officials. Some of the fruits were on display last March, when a death sentence was passed on an Afghan convert from Islam to Christianity—which was perfectly legal, because, under the U.S. occupation, Afghanistan forged a constitution that upholds Islam as the basis of all laws.

A major section of Mr. Bush's speech amounted to yet another attempt to present the hopeless quagmire in Iraq as an integral part of the War on Terror. Once again, we are on the offensive, with a clear plan for victory, *etc.* "The world is safer because Saddam Hussein is no longer in power," he said for the umpteenth time, and "now the challenge is to help the Iraqi people build a democracy that fulfills the dreams of the nearly 12 million Iraqis who came out to vote in free elections last December." He did not mention that those elections brought to power Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a committed Islamic activist who had spent years in Khomeini's Iran as an exile from Saddam's secularist regime. The day after Mr. Bush's speech, Premier Al-Maliki was cordially greeted by Iranian President Ahmadinejad in Tehran, who declared that "Iran and Iraq, as two brotherly neighbors, will stand by each other, and unwanted guests will leave the region."

Perhaps Mr. Bush does have "a clear plan to ensure that a democratic Iraq succeeds" and becomes "a strong ally in the war on terror," as he assured the nation in his speech, but, thus far, that plan's main beneficiaries have been people who see him as an "unwanted guest" and whose vision of "democracy" is some light years away from the notions of "tolerance and personal dignity" that he claims is the preferred ideal of most Middle Easterners.

That "America will stay in the fight" is extremely depressing, in view of Mr. Bush's flawed view of the enemy and the goal of that fight. All other errors notwithstanding, the most serious one remains his characterization of "a totalitarian ideology that hates freedom, rejects tolerance and despises all dissent" as "a perverted version of Islam"—or, as he put it some months previously in his State of the Union Address, "the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death."

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, I had hoped that Mr. Bush was not serious. In a "Memo to the President" (December 2001), I wrote that,

> While political considerations may temporarily oblige you to say that "Islam is a religion of peace," you must understand that Islam as such—not some allegedly aberrant form of it—is the main identifiable threat to America's global security in the coming century, and, in the longer term, to the survival of our civilization.

Two months later, after Mr. Bush's first State of the Union Address, which contained the foolhardy claim that the "real" Islam is America's ally in the War on Terror, I again noted that the President may have been disingenuous, not seriously deluded. By now, however, it is futile to pretend that Mr. Bush is being deviously diplomatic or clever. He is simply wrong.

Yes, we are in a war, but it can never be "won" in the sense of eliminating the phenomenon of terrorism altogether. It can be successfully pursued to the point where the Western world can be made significantly safer by adopting strategies—defensive strategies—that would reduce the danger of terrorism to as near zero as possible. This would require leaving the Muslim world to its own devices and preventing it from having a toehold in America. That will come, as I suggest in *Defeating Jihad*, "not by conquering Mecca for America but by disengaging America from Mecca and by excluding Mecca from America; not by eliminating the risk but by managing it wisely, resolutely, and permanently." That is the realist formula for victory, of which most Americans would approve and which would best serve the American interest.

That victory will not happen under this president or under any of his likely successors. Until it does come, may Heaven help us all. ◁©

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SCIENCE

The Universe Within

by Anthony Harrigan

Dr. James Watson, one of the discoverers of DNA, has written that the human brain is "the most complex thing we have yet discovered in the universe." Indeed, with its 100 billion cells, the human brain is a universe within a skull. This isn't an original insight: The importance of the brain was understood for thousands of years before scientists were able to analyze and explain its electrical and chemical complexities. The contemporary mapping of the brain only reinforces an understanding that goes back into the distant reaches of history.

The more we learn about the brain's structure, about the firing of neurons and the functioning of specific areas, the more our sense of wonder increases. But neuroscience and chemistry cannot fully encompass the miracle of the brain—or, more importantly, the mind. Only the fixated materialist believes that the mind is nothing more than the sum of the brain's electrochemical actions.

The extreme of materialism is revealed in the words of Dr. Marvin Minsky of MIT who said that the brain is just "hundreds of machines . . . connected to each other by bundles of nerve fibers, but not everything is connected to everything else. There is not any 'you'" (*Newsweek*, April 20, 1992). Does that explain Plato, Saint Paul, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Einstein? This kind of crude mechanistic approach to human personality, character, and insight is grossly inadequate as a vision of human existence.

The brain centers distinguish colors, left from right, regular from irregular verbs; estimate height and weight; and make amazing calculations. But the sum of all the parts calls into being the most extraordinary realms of discovery, self-awareness, and selflessness. Among countless other things, the human mind contemplates the role of the brain and its spheres and functions, analyzing and critiquing these functions. Indeed, the mind may determine that the brain is sick and requires analysis, treatment, or spiritual reformation. The mind considers, reconsiders, reviews, and reassesses the individual personality and character in terms of its relationship to other minds, other personalities, other creatures, and all the social structures of human life, as well as the philosophical, religious, and ideological structures of society. The mind questions its own processes and systems of understanding, its involvement with courses of action, creeds, and beliefs. It weighs the effects of its food intake, chemical imbalances, physiological states, sexual desires, and obligations. It seeks to understand its place in the wider universe, including the universe of the stars. It is never at rest except for brief spells of sleep—and even those times may be full of mental activity and creativity at a certain level. Finally, the human mind inquires as to what fate awaits it after death.

How can this be? How, in a vast universe of nonconscious existence and lifeless objects, can a mind, arising out of the fatty matter contained inside the skull and dependent on glucose, possess the extraordinary quality of consciousness that reaches within and without to comprehend everything perceived or imagined? How could the mind have evolved from the very simple brain structures of other living things?

The mind is not an abstraction, of course. It is an entity of knowledge and searching in a human body, a living force with a complex personal history. In short, it manifests an individual's gifts and capabilities. And we have to examine the thought and behavior of individuals to take in the full dimensions of the mind.

Socrates, one of the greatest minds of all time, said that the only life worth living is the examined life. Examining the mind may be part of that task. One interesting area of examination is the life of the mind as a human being ages. Certainly, the capacity of the mind is revealed only through the working of time on the flesh and blood of a man moving out of childhood into adulthood. Its development is an unfolding process in time. Some minds rise to their heights early in adulthood, while others clearly are at their peak at a much later period. There is a widely held belief that minds run down as old age approaches, but that isn't always the case—perhaps not even in a majority of people. A good case can be made that the mind widens its vision with advancing years. Enoch Powell, the British classicist, wrote that "one of the occupations of advancing age is self-observation" (*New Society*, May 6, 1989).

As a man grows old, he may have what my friend Charles Gusewelle refers to as "leaps of insight and intuition." T.S. Eliot may have had this in mind when he wrote that old men should be explorers. If there isn't any mind—only a brain with its interactions between neurons—then the phenomenon of special insights in old age makes no sense. Why didn't such insights occur when the blood vessels in the brain were in their peak condition?

Dr. John C. Marshall, director of the neuropsychiatry unit at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, noted in the *New York Times Book Review* (February 1994) that "Spiritual systems address many important issues about the meaning of our lives and our status as (potentially) moral beings; they tell us nothing about the structure of the brain." And this is true the other way around: The structures of our brain do not tell us anything about our insights into spiritual matters.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the mind is its ability to discover new intellectual pathways toward the mysteries of life. We explore the relationship of anatomical details, such as channels in the brain that provide a strong supply of blood, to the evolutionary process whereby many species came into existence to push forward the frontiers of life on this planet. Even as we search out the history of the stars, we strive to unlock the history of life forms on earth.

As scientists apply computer analysis and other technical tools to the study of the structures and processes of the brain, we must consider the characteristics of the human mind that transcend mechanistic functions. Dr. Howard Gardner, author of *The Mind's New Science*, cites the need for an "extended rumination on the nature of knowledge . . . " This, he notes, is what Socrates asked in *Meno*. Ruminations on the universe within may provide us with new insights—clues as to the sources of the mind, as distinct from the brain; a notion of the character of the mind; and, perhaps, the shortcomings of the mind.

René Descartes, writing in 1641, observed, "I find myself an infinity of ideas,"

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(*Meditations on First Philosophy*). In other words, the search for understanding of the human mind will endure as long as our species endures. The range of questions—out of Descartes' infinity of ideas—is unending: How is knowledge accessed? How can the mind, which is ostensibly devoted to its survival, embrace the idea of sacrificial death on behalf of an idea or another human being?

Perhaps the only inadequacy of the human mind is its limited ability to discern the state of health of the body, of which the brain is so important a part. Man has only an incomplete sense of his own health and well-being. He may feel sick, and, concerning this, pain may provide a crude signal. But many bodily ills—from diabetes to cancer—may make inroads without throwing off the signals of pain. A disease may be far advanced before it is detected.

Attempting to make up the difference, modern man has developed tools—magnetic-resonance imaging, for example—that reveal something of the state of one's health. But these tools, the products of reason and imagination, are not something basic to human nature.

We think we know a great deal about the mind. Reason has been studied intensively since the age of the classical thinkers who pondered man and the way he came to possess beliefs. And today, science is expanding our horizons in this regard through the study of DNA. We now know that there are 100,000 genes in the body that shape our brains. We have new perspectives on the old question of the comparative importance of nature and nurture. We have a better idea of the ways in which language both reflects and influences our thoughts and beliefs. We may, someday, be able to pinpoint the ancestral minds that molded us. If we gain that knowledge, however, we shall only return to the table with more questions: Who molded the minds of these ancestors? Who was our original progenitor, and whence came his frame of mind? These questions were, in fact, addressed 2,500 years ago by Plato and Aristotle. Are our minds determined in large measure by archetypical ideas? Again, whence came the archetypes, if they truly exist? The answers to these questions surely cannot be found among the neurological maps of our brains.

Will science ever be able to determine why two minds respond to each other and interact? The sources of anger and hate may not be such a mystery, for life involves challenge and struggle—often struggle for existence in competitive situations. The affinity between minds, however, is much harder to understand. And affinity often becomes affection and profound, selfless love, a rhapsodic communion between human minds in long-lasting, intense marriage relationships—a meeting of minds in the fullest sense. Again, why are such bonds between minds necessary and often inevitable? Why doesn't the human mind opt for a cooler relationship, for less than total bonding, which ends in death and therefore involves heartbreak?

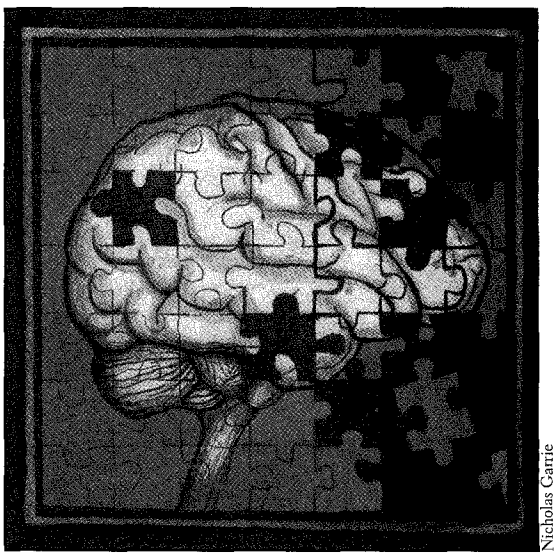
To understand the mysteries of the human mind more fully, we need to explore the realm of human affection. The reality is not as obvious as we might think. Why, for instance, has one person—one mind—a liking for a particular physical type? Is this the result of cultural conditioning? Is he searching for a type that brings to mind echoes of his family heritage? And what does he see when he looks into the eyes of a person of the opposite sex and draws conclusions about her nature? The ancient saying is that the eyes are the windows of the soul, and so they may be—but how is that so? How does the mind reach profound, far-reaching conclusions based on the optical nerve endings that relay information to the brain? The sex drive, the fundamental necessity of striving for survival and human continuity, surely colors many—sometimes all—of the actions of the mind. But this drive often takes obscure paths and leads to involvements with other minds, involvements that are anything but obvious or based on necessity.

We develop a web of relationships and store a great range of experiences, all of which bind our past to our future. That is not to say that we fully appreciate the past and the power it exerts on our minds and our actions in life. Andrew Lytle, in *A Wake for the Living* (1975), reminds us that "We dismiss the past as dead and not as a country of the living which our eyes are unable to see, as we cannot see a foreign country."

There surely is, in our minds, a legacy from the myriad layers of the past. The size and character of the legacy varies from individual to individual. In some, the legacy is so compelling that they become estranged denizens of the modern world, unable to come to terms with contemporary realities. In others, it is an enormously productive force, furnishing the mind with right insights. Different observers have markedly different views of the forces shaping the mind. For example, Lawrence Durrell, the novelist and poet, wrote in *The Spirit of Place* that "Human beings are expressions of their landscape." And this may have considerable truth in it, if one thinks of people long settled in a distinctive ancient landscape, such as the Greek islands, about which Durrell wrote. This perception, however, seems not at all applicable to modern man in an urban setting, in which he is alienated from the past and the civilization that preceded him. Here, the layers of earlier human experience are submerged and inoperative.

The brain undoubtedly contains thousands, if not millions, of pieces of information—fragments of perception that rarely, if ever, come to the surface. One of the mysteries of the mind is why certain pieces come to the surface and remain at the forefront of consciousness while so many others are locked away beyond retrieval. What are the keys to retrieval? Why is it so hard to unlock something one knows to be there but cannot reach?

Perhaps neuroscience will uncover some of the clues to the process of retrieval. Retrieval would seem to be one of the major secrets of both the brain and the mind. Science has made some progress toward understanding how we recognize different faces in a crowd. But when, if ever, will humans discover how the mind differentiates between the character of individuals, separating the good from the bad and the wise from the foolish? Again, the mysteries are endless. Philosophers and physicists have propounded theories about many of the giant mysteries of the universe. British physicist Stephen M. Hawking has asked, "Why does the uni-



Nicholas Garrie

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verse go to all the trouble of existing?" (*Kansas City Star*, April 15, 1990). We might also ask, why is the universe within driven by the desire for knowledge? And why is it interested in forming relationships and communicating feeling to other minds?

One of the characteristics of the mind is its low flash point. One may be a witness to a terrible tragedy—an automobile accident, for instance—and not be troubled by it but for a brief time. But the introduction of an idea—an abstraction—can trigger an explosion of concentration and energy, of intense feeling. Ideas, in other words, have an incendiary effect on the mind—and for reasons we cannot comprehend. This was illustrated in the dialogue between two characters in Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Ultimatum*. One asks: "Have you any idea what thunder in the mind abstractions provoke?" The second replies: "Those gray cells—they go crazy, spinning around like infinitesimal ping-pong balls trying to find tiny tunnels to explode through, drawn by their own inherent compulsions." This description of "thunder in the mind" is surely as good as any that a neuroscientist could use to explain the explosive effects of ideas. Ideas truly have the most tremendous consequences in the mind. It is puzzling that the evolution of the brain should produce such a nonpacific feature of mental activity, for it has no obvious utility for survival. On the contrary, this effect throws human beings into counterproductive conflict.

This aspect of the mind reveals one of the contradictory forces at work in the brain. The often incendiary response to ideas is at variance with other tendencies. Robert Ornstein, Ph.D., and David Sobel, M.D., in their book *The Healing Brain*, make the point, buttressed by considerable evidence, that "basic to the evolution of the brain is our early attachment and dependence on other people." Yet it can also be argued that features of the brain make it combat-ready and that the overall mind develops or responds to ideas that are conflict-oriented, as human experience proves. Why the mind should have dual tendencies is inscrutable, but we can see both tendencies in operation in human behavior.

That the reason for these contradictory mental characteristics is not apparent does not mean that neuroscience should stop searching for answers. But the answers, if they are eventually found, are more likely to come from philosophy. Heretical as it may seem to many moderns, there are limits to what can be reached by scientific methods. The mind, despite what many scientists believe (as opposed to what they can prove), is not just a better-than-average computer. Important as the electronic and plumbing systems of the brain are, the mind cannot be understood simply in these terms. The computer analogy would only make sense if the mind were strictly a physical phenomenon. No computer, no matter what its capabilities, could ever contemplate itself or have an inner voice to which it listens, which is what the human mind possesses. In any case, the materialists surely face an impossible task in endeavoring to explain away the subjective state of being, the feeling of individual identity. For those who recognize the endless mysteries of the human mind, the last word may be that of philosopher John Searle: "I think it is madness to suppose that everything is understandable by us." In other words, when we consider the wonders of the universe within, the last word is *humility*.

Anthony Harrigan writes from Washington, D.C.

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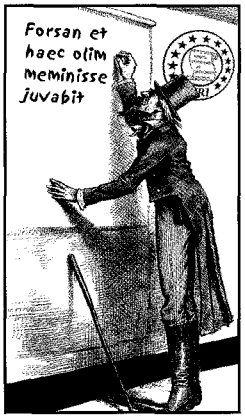

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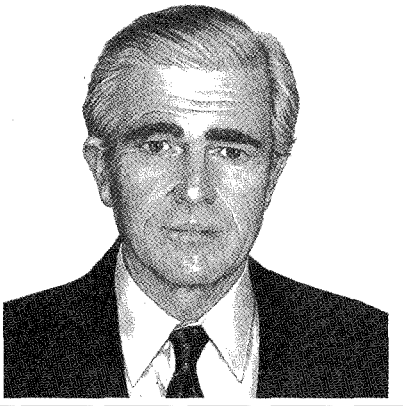
by George McCartney

Of Men and Supermen



Hollywoodland

Produced by Miramax Films
Directed by Allen Coulter
Screenplay by Paul Bernbaum
Distributed by Focus Features

Of the entertainment industry's many venerable traditions, cashing in on dead celebrities ranks just below rehabilitating headliner junkies. Untold millions have been made under the guise of immortalizing fallen performers—think of James Dean, Elvis, John Lennon. And who hasn't heard Dean Martin singing "That's Amore" while rummaging through the Croft & Barrow sales tables at Kohl's? (Not that Martin would complain; he'd be the first to appreciate the joke. He was man enough to know that the song's deathless lyric, "When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie," was really a gloss on his career.)

Still, I have to admit I was surprised that Miramax had greenlighted *Hollywoodland*, a film centered on George Reeves, the third-tier actor who played Superman on television in the 1950's. The film's advertising tag line is even more astonishing: "Living in Hollywood can make you famous. Dying in Hollywood can make you a legend." George Reeves a legend? You could have fooled me. And Reeves, too, I suspect. But such is capitalism. Nothing is ever wasted.

Director Allen Coulter and screenwriter Paul Bernbaum have tried to make *Hollywoodland* a blend of Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* and Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. They succeed, at times; often, however, the production seems more a shaggy-dog story than a satiric film *noir*. What's more, it's a dog that smells of tabloid exploitation. There is fun to be had in watching the film, but you'll feel sullied when the lights come up.

The narrative uses Reeves' death as a platform from which to launch an investigation into America's obsession with celebrity and scandal. Reeves' demise in 1959, after eight years of playing Superman, was determined to be a suicide by gunshot. Almost immediately, however, suspicions of murder began to percolate through our rollicking media culture. There seems to have been just enough ambiguity surrounding his death to allow for speculation, in both its intellectual and financial sense. I know little about Reeves and less about his death, but I do know reports of his murder have paid off handsomely for Sam Kashner, whose book, *Hollywood Kryptonite*, served as a basis for the film. Kashner even parlayed his literary venture to become a consultant on the project.

Kashner's book is one of those knowing celebrity wowsers filled with guesses presented as facts. It also includes inexplicably detailed recreations of speeches and thoughts—all, strangely enough, belonging to people who are now safely dead. Are Kashner's lurid insinuations true? I don't know; nor do Bernbaum and Coulter. This may explain why their film gingerly avoids answering the key question it so insistently asks. Although Kashner claims Reeves was murdered, the film finally leaves the matter unresolved. The filmmakers have chosen, instead, to make of Reeves' life an occasion to dramatize a certain ghoulish sector of American culture. But in a film that purports to expose Hollywood's penchant for exploiting both live and dead flesh, isn't it a tad unseemly to ply the same trade? There are, after all, the reputations of real people to be considered.

Speaking of reputations, Reeves is said to have been a nice if boozy guy who allowed himself to be seduced by Hollywood, both figuratively and literally. He lingered in the lotus bog well beyond what might be excused under the rubric of youthful indulgence. After a stint at the Pasadena Playhouse, he landed a small role in 1939's *Gone With the Wind*, playing one of Scarlett O'Hara's would-be suitors, a man whom Tara's debutante first mildly encourages and then rejects to pursue Ashley Wilkes, her real love. The role uncannily presaged what Reeves would experience courting Hollywood. After serving in the Army making training films during World War II, he came back to Hollywood expecting to pick up where he had so promisingly left off. Few wanted him, however, and, although he wangled small parts in many B films, he never came close to the big time. He found himself in low-budget adventure serials wielding cardboard swords. Occasionally, he stepped up to snag a secondary role in a Hopalong Cassidy feature. Then, in 1951, he was seduced by an older woman, Toni Mannix (Diane Lane), who became his personal Circe. Toni was married to the inattentive Eddie Mannix (Bob Hoskins), a more-than-usually thuggish vice president at MGM whose duties ran to fixing awkward problems others didn't want to touch. When a bankable star had been indiscreet, the studio turned to Eddie. His earlier tutelage in mobbed-up New Jersey gave him the wherewithal to instantly silence would-be scandalmongers.

Whether through passion or calculation—probably a bit of both—Reeves allowed himself to become Toni's kept man or, as she referred to him, "her boy." Toni was eight years older than Reeves and, through her husband, wealthy and well connected. As for Eddie, there was supposedly no problem. The Mannixes had an understanding. For his own hassle-free pleasure, Eddie kept a non-English-speaking Japanese woman. Toni was therefore free to dally where she would, and she would with Reeves. Big, handsome, and 37 when she met him, Reeves didn't look like a conventional gigolo, but, after ten years of hanging around Hollywood hoping to become a star, he wasn't about to decline the part. He seems to have been primed to accept the sordid opportunity Toni presented him. She solved his economic problems, buying him a house and an expensive car and paying his restaurant and swelling liquor bills. Apparently, Reeves was dumb enough not to see where this would lead. Toni financed his extravagant lifestyle, but her influence only went so far in pro-

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fessional matters. Choice acting roles continued to elude Reeves. When he was finally offered an opportunity to play Superman, he took the part reluctantly, telling himself it was only television, and no one who counted would ever see it. Of course, he was wrong. The show was a 50's phenomenon. With few other prospects, he continued with it, hoping to get into the directing and production end of television eventually. Then, in 1959, he tried to free himself of Toni. He took up with a much younger woman, Leonore Lemmon, a wild society girl with showbiz ambitions. She made him feel young again, he explained to Toni. Ouch! No wonder there are those who speculate that Toni shot him with the Luger she had given him for protection. Or was it Toni's husband, enraged that his wife should be dumped by a mere television actor? Then, again, maybe it was Reeves' new inamorata. Some said he was having second thoughts about their marriage plans. Using a clumsy framing device, the film dramatizes all three scenarios through the eyes of a grubby Hollywood detective named Louis Simo (Adrian Brody) who is hired by Reeves' batty mother to find out who murdered her only son. (She is determined not to accept the suicide verdict.) Simo returns to the bedroom in which Reeves suffered the fatal gunshot again and again, each time imagining the event from a different perspective. The repetition is so obsessive that you cannot help wondering if Coulter thought he was making another multilayered *Citizen Kane*. What's more, the hangdog Simo begins to see parallels between himself and Reeves, the most egregious involving the detective's eight-year-old son. Having been a steadfast *Superman* fan, the boy angrily burns his Superman costume in the wake of Reeves' reported suicide. ("He used a Luger. That's a Nazi pistol," he wails inconsolably over the charred suit.) Later, in a flashback, Reeves burns his own costume after learning the series has been canceled. See? There's an equation between the two. Reeves and the boy haven't the maturity to confront disillusionment. Or is this too symbolic?

Ben Affleck has been praised for his portrayal of Reeves. Several reviewers see the role as his triumphant return to Hollywood's stellar precincts after a string of embarrassing performances, including his turn as another superhero in *Daredevil* three years ago. After all, he packed on 20 pounds or more to resemble the fleshy Reeves, and, as everyone knows, in film these days, weight gain is the *ne plus ultra* of acting gravitas. To be fair, Affleck does well enough playing Reeves the private man. As Reeves the TV actor, however, he gets it all wrong. He camps it up in his padded Superman costume, sticking out his chest and mugging with a strenuously curled lip to convey the character's heroic determination. This is not Reeves' Superman at all. Reeves always underplayed the role. He looked like a mildly bemused suburban dad, big and strong, but running to fat, a fellow well acquainted with mortality. His paunchy middle made him seem a man in early middle age, taking a few moments from his busy schedule to play a superhero for his adoring children. Whether this was deliberate or not, it seems to have been the secret to the series' success. Reeves' Superman met the needs of millions of the 1950's growing ranks of suburban children whose fathers had to be away from home for most of the day and, often, the evening, while they tried to earn enough to pay for their cottage palaces. Superman served these kids as a slightly idealized image of their fathers, men who watched over them from a distance as they fulfilled their Clark Kent duties at their offices.

The one scene in which Affleck excels involves a reportedly real incident that occurred during one of Reeves' promotional tours. Coulter has included it, I believe, as harbinger of the actor's death by gunshot. Appearing before a large group of boys in his costume, Affleck wrangles with some stage villains, twisting their guns into oversized pretzels. The kids cheer delightedly. Then one steps from the crowd with his own gun, asking if he might shoot the Man of Steel. Affleck smiles at first but then sees the gun is real. His canned cheerfulness vanishes, replaced by a quiet, controlled alarm. He is obviously fearful not only for himself but for the other children. He falls to one knee the better to talk to the youngster and softly asks him why he would want to shoot Superman. The boy answers that he wants to see bullets bounce off his chest. With a stillness that is nearly unbearable, Affleck explains why this would be a bad idea, as he slowly reaches for the gun. It is a curiously moving moment, simultaneously touching and horrifying, and Affleck brings it off with genuinely affecting gentleness. It would seem that, forced to confront its darker aspect, Reeves took responsibility for the childish hero worship he had engendered, risking his life and reputation to do so.

I am not sure what Coulter intended by it, but, for me, this scene came close to redeeming the film's many lapses. Reeves thought he had thrown away his career by accepting a role as a children's superhero. Actually, the stakes were considerably higher. By surrendering to the cheap enchantment of Hollywood dreams, he had wasted a good portion of his life. He had refused to grow up and thereby made himself a target of our infantile celebrity culture, which, however indirectly, finally destroyed him. If his story is worth telling, it is certainly not because it's tragic. Reeves did not have the self-awareness tragedy requires. Our attention is commanded, rather, by his life's unsuspected poignancy. The Superman persona he so disliked was, had he only been able to see it, the key that might have opened what was locked within him: his unrealized capacity to become fully a man. ◁©

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Government by the People

Héctor Villa was, by nature, a patient, long-suffering man. Even so, he arrived home in a cross mood that evening, at the end of an unusually frustrating day. First, there had been the traffic ticket; next, his unproductive meeting with Mrs. Ahmadinejihad. Finally, he'd been unable to meet with the school principal, after waiting for better than an hour for him to be through with what his secretary described, in an awed voice, as a meeting with the football coach and the head cheerleader. When, at last, the principal emerged from his office, he and the secretary had held a rapid conversation in whispers, ending with the principal striding off without a word to Héctor. He had, the secretary explained, a seminar on educational democracy to attend at the Valencia Branch of UNM.

"Panchito, what is the matter?" AveMaría exclaimed when she saw him. "That creature in *demonia*'s form agreed to give Contracep a B at least, didn't she?"

Héctor waved her off impatiently on his way to the fridge for a beer.

"I'll tell you about all that in a minute," he said. "I got a fifty-dollar ticket on the Jarales Road this afternoon driving over to the school."

"A ticket? Driving my car? What for, I'd like to know?"

For the first time in his life, Héctor felt the urge to strike a woman.

"For driving an unregistered vehicle! You forgot to register the damn Subaru last summer!"

"I did not! *¿Quién dice que sí?* I mailed the check and registration myself, two days before the two-cent postal increase! I can show you the canceled check right now, if you want to see it!"

Héctor did not know what to think. On the one hand, it was good news to learn he didn't deserve a ticket, after all. On the other, it disturbed him profoundly that such a mistake—if it was a mistake—could happen in the United States. New Mexico wasn't México, where you were all the time being gouged with the *mordida* by one public official or another. He fished the ticket from his shirt pocket and sat down at the kitchen table with a bottle of Corona.

"Either I mail them a check for fifty bucks or show up at Municipal Court a week from Monday for arraignment," he told his wife gloomily.

"But you are innocent! Did you not show them the registration form—in the pocket in the *tablero*, with the other papers?"

"Of course, I showed it to him. Am I a *tonto*? He said it was *caducada*—no good."

"Then it is the *guardia* who is *tonto*, not you."

Ever since he'd received the summons from the zoning board, Héctor had avoided city hall the way a man avoids the neighborhood of a hospital where he was once treated for a deadly disease. "I need to phone the department right now and explain it all to them," he said.

"But first, I want to hear—did Mrs. Abomina-Jihad change Contracep's grade to an A-, or not?"

To his surprise, the cop himself—an Officer Maldonado—was at the station when he called. "So maybe a mistake was made somewhere," he said finally, when Héctor had finished his explanation. "You never know with computers. Anyway, once I write a ticket, I've wrote it—that's the law. You got to go to court and tell the judge what you told me. Or just send the fifty bucks—it's whatever you decide to do, sir."

When Contracepción returned half an hour later from the minimall where she'd spent most of her week off from school, she was as outraged as her mother had been by Héctor's account of his interview with Mrs. Ahmadinejihad. "How dare her!" she cried. "She's not even American! Why don't they send the raghead back to Iraq where she belongs!"

"And as if that wasn't enough for one day, one of those Nuevo Méxicano cops gave your father a fifty-dollar ticket for driving an unregistered car I registered myself more than three months ago!" AveMaría put in. "We might as well never have left México in the first place!"

"Don't talk that way, AveMaría!" her husband corrected her sharply. The truth was, Héctor, in his heart, felt troubled and confused. He was witnessing an arbitrary aspect of his adoptive country he had scarcely known existed before today. The business of the zoning board eighteen months ago had not, it seemed, been the thoroughly anomalous affair he'd assumed it to be. "In America, we have government of the people, by the people, and for the people. You will see, both of you! All this will come right in the end."

Driving to his first job next morning, Héctor used his cell phone to inform the FBI office in Albuquerque of his suspicions regarding Mrs. Ahmadinejihad and Tomasina Luna. Next, he phoned the principal's secretary to make a formal appointment for an interview with her boss. The woman's manner was strange, he thought, and she kept him on hold a long time. When she came back on the line, the secretary explained that, from the principal's viewpoint, he and Héctor had nothing to discuss: Mrs. Ahmadinejihad had merely been applying a valuable multicultural perspective to his daughter's essay. Héctor was starting to reply that, for an American school, the only appropriate teaching perspective was an American one when the woman, pleading an important incoming call, broke off the conversation without telling him goodbye. Offended by her lack of manners, Héctor reflected that it would be easier to procure an audience with Vicente Fox at Los Pinos than to make an appointment to see Dr. Virgilio Gallegos, principal of the Belen High School—and was instantly ashamed of his unpatriotic thoughts. The school situation, he decided, must be deferred until after his arraignment, only four days away. It would, Jesús "Eddie" Juarez had advised him, take most, if not all, of his morning.

"The judge, he is Anglo," Jesús "Eddie" had added. "Red hair, one of them spotted-all-over faces like a flea-bitten horse—name's McCorkle, the skinny sonofabitch, from Catron County where

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the Anglos run everything. Ex-Confederate racists, come into New Mexico when the Yankees chased them out of Mississippi and Texas after the Civil War."

In fact, Héctor was detained half an hour in municipal court. Together with his fellow miscreants, he sat waiting on one of the folding chairs arranged in careful rows as armed policemen led in four shackled men wearing prison garb and stood them before the black-robed judge. The first prisoner pled guilty to cutting a man with a knife in an altercation in the Belen movie theater; the second, to public intoxication; and the other two, to DUI and operating an unregistered vehicle.

When Héctor's name was called, he rose and approached the bench with alacrity, feeling confident in his innocence and his best business suit. In addressing the previous defendants, the judge had assumed a peremptory, even contemptuous demeanor suggesting that, no matter how Lady Justice might decide, he considered all of them guilty until proven innocent (and perhaps not even then). Héctor found his manner distinctly off-putting. Still, he fully expected Judge McCorkle to recognise him for the innocent man he was and adjust his manner accordingly. To his discomfiture, the judge appeared unable to distinguish between Héctor Villa and some knife-wielding *matón* in jail pajamas. Nevertheless, Héctor remembered to say, "Yes, Your Honor" and "No, Your Honor," and answered, "NOT guilty, Your Honor," in a strong, assertive voice when asked how he pled.

"Are you aware all the prosecution has to do to prove this criminal misdemeanor charge is establish valid tags were not in fact in place on your vehicle at the time of the arrest?" McCorkle demanded. Héctor responded in the affirmative and was starting to add that the tags had been affixed to both the front and rear plates of the Subaru, when the judge interrupted to warn him sharply that an arraignment was not the proper place to offer evidence. To Héctor's dismay, instead of dismissing the case, Judge McCorkle set a trial date, and then Héctor was free to go.

The mood around the dinner table chez Villa that evening was grim. To the subdued family, Héctor's arraignment came as an added blow in a week in which AveMaría had been rebuffed in her attempts at going over Dr. Gallegos' head by securing an appointment with the school superintendent and Mrs. Ahmadinejihad had responded to the open letter of protest posted by Contracepción on the school Information and Coming Events Board by assigning her a two-page paper on the contribution of Islam to the making of Western civilization. America, as a country of laws and free speech, was plainly being replaced by a new, un-free America—a conclusion reinforced for Héctor by a FOX News segment concerning a former Taliban member, now a scholarship student at Yale University, who was demanding (evidently with some success) the construction of a minaret overlooking the quad to allow a *muezzin* to sound the call to prayer seven times daily across the campus. The upshot of all this, so far as it concerned Héctor Villa, was that he needed now to retain an attorney to defend him in municipal court.

"I'm going to get even with that Jihad woman," Contracepción boasted. "She's going to wish she was back in Iraq with all the Swamis and Swahilis before I'm through with her."

"You will do no such thing," her father told her sternly. "If I ever hear of you making trouble at school, I'll send you to live with your grandmother in Namiquipa where you'll learn what a tough teacher really is like. When I was at school, Señor Arias used to beat us black and blue when we couldn't remember the words to 'Méxicanos, Al Grido De Guerra.'"

At the risk of offending Jesús "Eddie," who'd recommended Miguel Castro, a local attorney specializing in antidiscrimination law, Héctor decided to retain Francisco Madrid, a dreamy man who practiced law only part time while devoting the rest of it to classical guitar and the construction of an environmentally friendly house from chicken wire, crushed aluminum cans, and old tires. At first, Madrid tried to dissuade him from wasting his money on a lawyer. It was an open-and-shut case in Héctor's favor, he insisted. As soon as the judge learned that Officer Maldonado couldn't read an auto registration form when it was shown him, he'd be certain to dismiss the charges. Héctor considered this advice carefully and decided to reject it. After nearly fifteen years in the United States, he was learning to proceed more cautiously in respect of the powers that be.

The day of the trial, Héctor, resisting the superstitious temptation to stop by Our Lady of Belen to offer up a Hail Mary, drove with AveMaría and Dubya to court, where Francisco Madrid awaited them. His case was stacked first in the afternoon session, so they didn't have to wait long. Judge McCorkle entered in his black robes, and everyone stood up. He sat down, and everyone sat after him. The few people in the courtroom seemed to be the miscreants themselves and their guardian angels holding their briefs in their laps.

The proceedings passed for Héctor in a rapid blur. The prosecuting attorney argued that the defendant, having originally neglected to attach current registration tabs to his license plates, had affixed them following his arrest. Cross-examined by Madrid, Officer Maldonado testified that he had not checked all the several expired tabs left on the rear plate, as Dispatch had already confirmed an unregistered vehicle for him. Here, the prosecutor pounced, asserting the reason Maldonado had failed to identify the valid tag at once was that the defendant had placed it in the upper-left, rather than the lower-right, corner of the plate, where it belonged. The legal understanding of "in place" was "in the right place," the prosecutor urged. Therefore, he concluded, the defendant was indeed guilty as charged. Judge McCorkle found for the City of Belen and fined the defendant fifty dollars. The entire business was over in under ten minutes.

Francisco Madrid was too embarrassed for a postmortem. He left the Villas outside the courthouse and headed directly for his car. Héctor followed him toward the parking area, walking slowly and unconsciously like a somnambulist. The family had just reached the Subaru when the cellphone AveMaría carried in her handbag went off, sounding the refrain of the golden oldie "It's My Party." She made a grab for it and stood listening as if transfixed, her eyes widening in horror.

"*¡Panchito!*" she gasped.

"Who the hell is calling me at a time like this?"

"It's the school! Contracepción is in trouble! They've already called the juvenile officer. Something about a statue of Muhammad in a bottle of tequila found in the Abomina-Jihad woman's desk!"

Héctor, exercising his Second Amendment rights, kept a loaded pistol under the driver's seat of his van. Fortunately for everyone concerned, neither truck nor pistol was to hand just now. For the first time since he'd purchased it several years before, he felt an irresistible urge to use the gun on someone (he knew just whom). Worse than anger, though, was the overwhelming sense of disillusionment he was experiencing. Héctor had learned for himself the truth of the hoary American saying: "You can't fight city hall." ◁

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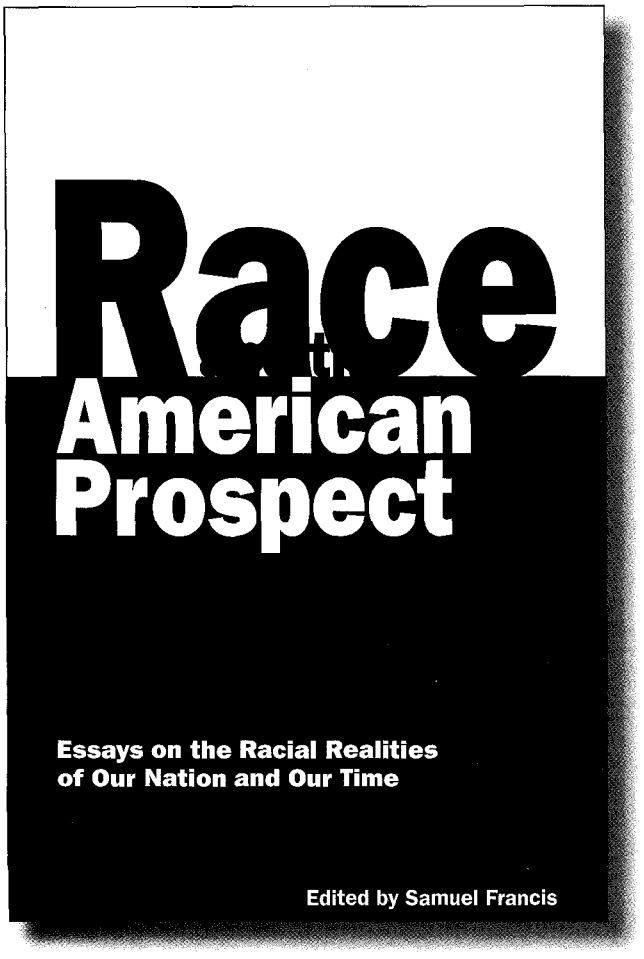

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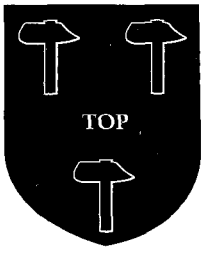

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